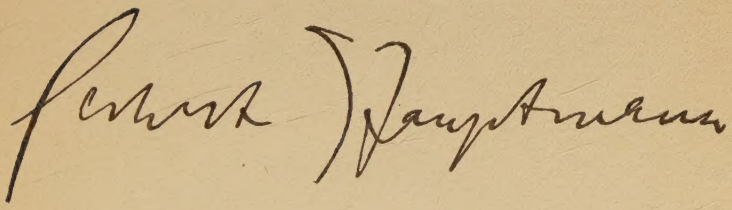
GERHART HAUPTMANN

DRAMATIC WORKS

THE DRAMATIC WORKS
OF



VOLUME SIX:

THE MAIDENS OF THE MOUNT
GRISELDA
GABRIEL SCHILLING'S FLIGHT

THE DRAMATIC WORKS
OF
GERHART HAUPTMANN

(AUTHORIZED EDITION)

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VOLUME SIX:
LATER DRAMAS IN PROSE

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CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION vii
By the Editor.

THE MAIDENS OF THE MOUNT (Die Jungfern vom Bischofsberg) 1
Translated by the Editor.

GRISELDA (Griselda) 159
Translated by the Editor.

GABRIEL SCHILLING'S FLIGHT (Gabriel Schillings Flucht) 281
Translated by the Editor.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The three plays in this volume present, in clearly defined fashion, three phases of Hauptmann's dramatic art. In *The Maidens of the Mount* he recalls an episode of his own past which had faded into the remoteness and unsubstantiality of dreams; in *Griselda* he essays once more a modern and human interpretation of one of the famous fables of the world; in *Gabriel Schilling's Flight* he grapples with the problem of sex in its acutest and most modern form.

It was in 1884 that Hauptmann lived through the "summernight's dream" which he has interpreted in *The Maidens of the Mount.* In that year he and his two brothers wooed the three daughters of Herr Thienemann at Hohenhaus, the country seat which is so exactly reproduced in the description of the Bishop's Mount. So many years had passed and so different had the emotional colour of life grown to Hauptmann that he could view the episode of his youth without pain, without regret, without distortion, and see in the memory of it merely a symbol of the dreamlike quality of human life. What had once been of a reality so poignant was now but like a tale heard long ago. Out of this mood Hauptmann created a group of people whose actions and passions are surrounded by an atmosphere of impermanence — an impermanence of which they themselves finally become aware. Autumn will be followed by winter on the Bishop's Mount and also in the hearts of men. The best

part of life remains the dream which is permanent long after the reality is sere and withered and is as though it had not been.

In *Griselda* Hauptmann employs once more the method of psychological interpretation which he had used so triumphantly in *Henry of Auë*. The legend of Patient Grizzel has, as it stands, no reality or humanity of motive to the modern mind. The figures are like mediæval illuminations with rigid limbs and unearthly eyes. Hauptmann causes them to melt into life. It is possible to contend, to be sure, that the motives which, in the play, are the springs of the action, are rather modern; that Ulrich's absorbing love of Griselda, which makes him jealous of his child, has a touch of the pathological. It is equally fair to argue, on the other hand, that human nature has known no great change through the ages, even as the world about us has been constant in its character within the limits of human history. Only neither literature nor science had, until quite recently, cultivated either the gift of observation or the capacity of making an exact record. Upon this assumption Hauptmann's art in *Griselda* is as sound in method as it is admirable in effect.

There remains *Gabriel Schilling's Flight,* the most notable of these later plays in prose. The strictly modern problem of the relation of the sexes — especially as it affects the intellectual worker — has never been long out of Hauptmann's mind. It is either the exciting force of the action or else the central problem in *The Reconciliation, Lonely Lives, Colleague Crampton, The Sunken Bell* and *Michael Kramer*. In *Gabriel Schilling's Flight* his analysis has grown more acrid. It is projected

creatively in the characters of the two women — Evelyn Schilling and Hanna Elias. What is it, in these women, that — different as they are — menaces so fatally the man and the artist Schilling? It is a passion for possession, for absorption, a hunger of the nerves rather than of the heart. These modern women have abandoned the simple and sane preoccupations of their grandmothers; the enormous garnered nervous energy that is no longer expended in household tasks and in child bearing strikes itself, beak and clawlike, into man. But man has not changed. His occupations are not gone. He cannot endure the double burden. That is why Gabriel Schilling, rather than be destroyed spiritually by these tyrannies and exactions, seeks a last refuge in the great and cleansing purity of the sea.

"The modern malady of love is nerves."

The play, moreover, is of a rare exquisiteness in both its spiritual and stylistic texture. Hauptmann, at fifty, has had perceptions and visions that his youth would have distrusted and thrust aside. He returns to the old gods, the undying hopes; he stands at the gate of an invisible world and has glimpses of the supra-sensual and eternal.

The prose of Hauptmann's later dialogue is in a subtler and more difficult manner. It is less easy, less idiomatic; he struggles to express that which is no less true and important for being more esoteric. It is thus akin to the later manner often found in eminent artists — pregnant rather than eloquent, meaningful rather than comely. To this manner it was not always easy to be just and yet to remain clear. I have done my best, in these versions, to combine faithfulness with idiomatic perspicuity.

LUDWIG LEWISOHN.

THE MAIDENS OF THE MOUNT

A COMEDY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

SABINE RUSCHEWEY
ADELAIDE RUSCHEWEY
AGATHA RUSCHEWEY
LUDOVICA RUSCHEWEY
Four sisters aged 25, 22, 20 and 15, daughters of the late Bertold Ruschewey.

GUSTAV RUSCHEWEY, *brother of Bertold, aged 68.*

EMILY RUSCHEWEY, *sister of Bertold, aged 60.*

DR. EWALD NAST, *foster son of* MISS EMILY, *aged 37.*

MRS. MADELON VON HEYDER, *grandmother of the* RUSCHEWEY *sisters.*

REINHOLD KRANZ, *betrothed of* ADELAIDE, *aged 27.*

OTTO KRANZ, *his brother, aged 17, art-student.*

DR. GRÜNWALD, *physician, aged 34.*

DR. KOZAKIEWICZ, *librarian, aged 36; in delicate health.*

THE REVEREND COUNCILLOR JOEL, *aged 70.*

A VAGABOND.

A GENTLEMAN.

THE STRANGER.

The sisters RUSCHEWEY *are dressed with harmonious similarity.*

The action takes place in the second half of the last century.

THE FIRST ACT

A room in "Bishop's Mount," an old-fashioned country house situated amid gardens and vineyards on the river Saale. The back-ground shows a thick wall with a deep niche pierced by a broad window with leaded panes. Through this window are visible the towers and roofs of an ancient city on the opposite slope of the hill. It is Naumburg. In the niche, upon a platform, stand ancient seats formed of the same sandstone as the floor. Between these stands a spinning-wheel. The roof of the room is vaulted. From the middle of the ceiling hangs a handsome brass candelabrum with candles. Under it stands a great, round heavy table of oak. The table is covered with black, gold-bordered velvet cloth and bears silver vessels and a gilt, embossed goblet. An ancient chimney adorns the wall to the left. At both sides of it hang pictures, darkened by time, showing bishops in their vestments. The opposite wall is covered by a large cupboard of Renaissance workmanship. It is toward noon of a day in the beginning of October. On two high-backed chairs facing one another sit old RUSCHEWEY *in simple country garb and an elderly* STRANGER *who keeps his hat, umbrella and overcoat on his lap.* RUSCHEWEY *is bronzed, bearded,*

vigorous, jovial. The Stranger, *whose appearance is not prepossessing, wears spectacles, overshoes, and presents the guise of musty scholarship.*

Ruschewey

Yes, yes! You don't object if I light my pipe in the meanwhile.

The Stranger

Not at all, sir! It isn't for me to do so! I have come here in all due modesty, merely in order to inquire after the well-being of the young ladies who, as to my great grief I read, have been so early deprived of both father and mother by the harshness of fate. May I ask whether the condition of the young ladies is satisfactory? In so far, I mean, as it is possible, in these circumstances?

Ruschewey

Oh, yes, yes, my nieces are tolerably well off.

The Stranger

It was a very grievous blow . . . the father following the mother so soon.

Ruschewey

Yes, no doubt. But by the way: In what paper did you read about it. Because our Heavenly Father removed my poor sister-in-law, who really *was* too good for this world, fifteen years ago. My brother Bertold survived her for fourteen years. At first I thought he wouldn't outlive her six

months. Where by the way did you make my brother's acquaintance?

THE STRANGER

Curiously enough in an antiquary's shop in Amsterdam. I remember the circumstances very exactly. It was in the Ghetto, a quarter little calculated to promote social relationships. But Mr. Ruschewey was making his third visit there, as he told me, for the sake of an old violin which the Jewish antiquary had in his possession.

RUSCHEWEY

[*Rises and opens the cupboard.*] He bought the old violin. Here it is, if you care to see it. [*He takes a large, closed violin case from the cupboard and places it on the table.*] It's years and years ago that Bertold bought the violin.

THE STRANGER

It was in the year of the war, in 'seventy-one. Your brother had a humorous turn and often made the antiquary laugh. But it took them a long time to agree.

RUSCHEWEY

I know. He set great store by it. For he had taken it into his head that this violin was the very one that had been stolen from my father many decades ago. Now our father was organist at the old cathedral over in Naumburg and he had found the instrument heaven knows where — in the sacristy or belfry or some such sanctuary of moths and roaches and worms — and found it, above all,

in fragments. [*He opens the case and carefully throws back the silken cloths that hide the violin.*] I only hope that Lux won't come in! If she does she'll take her uncle by the ears.

THE STRANGER

I suppose it belongs to the young ladies?

RUSCHEWEY

Certainly it belongs to her. And rightly so. For the other reason why my brother was so keen on the fiddle was that Lux when she was a little girl of six or seven always hummed a song which said, "Oh, I'd like to have a little fiddle of my own!" Well, she has learned to handle her bow well since those days.

THE STRANGER

Which is Miss Lux?

RUSCHEWEY

The baby. The last bird in the nest; but she, too, is trying her wings.

THE STRANGER

May I ask, immodest as it may seem, whether it might not be possible for me to see the ladies if but for one brief, delightful minute?

RUSCHEWEY

I scarcely believe it.

THE STRANGER

Even though one were in a position to tell them matters of close personal interest concerning one's meeting with their father?

RUSCHEWEY

Heaven knows the girls are shier than wood pigeons.

THE STRANGER

I was told that at the hotel in Naumburg when I asked for information concerning your country-seat. I confess that I am sorry. I trust you will take my remarks in the spirit in which they are meant — just between us two men — when I tell you that I'm not without private means, a bachelor, and full professor of classical philology at Dorpat. You don't take my remark amiss?

RUSCHEWEY

Not at all, sir! Why should I?

THE STRANGER

Exactly. And I may say too that, as the child of poor parents, I have achieved all that I am by iron and tireless industry. Well, then! "When once you're a professor," your excellent brother said to me that day when we were so pleasantly admiring the Portuguese synagogue at Amsterdam —"When once you're a professor, come to see me! I have a delightful pheasantry," he added not without a touch of humour. "It will please you." Unhappily I didn't avail myself of the invitation. For when I got my appointment . . .

RUSCHEWEY

If you don't object, professor, we can go right out into the garden and I can open the little gate below for you. By taking the upper path you take a needlessly long way.

THE STRANGER

I am extremely indebted to you. But one more word before I go. I've taken this long trip . . . I'm not as young as I was . . . Would it be quite useless — this as from one man of honour to another! I am frank to say that I was thinking of the oldest of the ladies. I need some one of mature years. Would it be quite useless if I spent any more time and trouble?

RUSCHEWEY

Quite useless. Unconditionally so.

[*Interrupted calling is heard and suddenly the bell-like laughter of girls.*

THE STRANGER

[*Has risen and bowed.*] Pardon me if I have disturbed you. The way up here is a difficult one.

RUSCHEWEY

The lower path is by far the easier.

[*He opens a small side door and permits* THE STRANGER *to precede him. Both disappear.*

LUDOVICA RUSCHEWEY, *a slender girl of fifteen, with a small head, comes in lightly through*

one of the doors by the chimney. Observing the violin on the table she is surprised and indignant.

Ludovica

What's the meaning of this? I wonder who had the boldness, to put it mildly, to take my violin out? [*She takes the instrument from its case, examines it and puts it back.* Adelaide *enters by the same door.* Ludovica *calls out to her:*] Did you handle my fiddle?

Adelaide

[*A beautiful and mature girl with an expressive face and of almost Southern fire and passion.*] You silly, what makes you think that? Do go over and peek from behind the curtains. Uncle is steering some one out again.

[*Hiding behind the hangings, she looks out at the window.*

Ludovica

[*Joining her sister at the window.*] Heavens! He looks as though he had escaped from a charnel house! His face is like an old pigskin binding.

Adelaide

He might almost be a brother of Ewald Nast. Or do you think him handsomer?

Ludovica

[*Shuddering.*] Spare me, Adelaide, I beg of you!

[*She walks back to the table, closes the violin case and replaces it in the cupboard.*

ADELAIDE

Hadn't you better practice a bit at once?

LUDOVICA

[*Archly imitating a gesture of priestly blessing.*] No, you blessed and chosen maiden, no!

ADELAIDE

Well, my dear child, why not? You have quite a good while still to wait.

LUDOVICA

Frankly, your conquest and your outlook don't dazzle me in the least. Your married name will be Mrs. Kranz, not even Mrs. von Kranz. Ruschewey sounds a great deal better and we have a family tree in addition! The captain looked quite handsome the other day when the officers came riding out! But Agatha is quite blind! She doesn't see the best turned leg. So there remains her excellent pedagogue Ewald. I'd turn seamstress rather than marry him.

ADELAIDE

[*With arch surprise.*] Listen to the baby talking! I'll fetch you another bag of sweets.

LUDOVICA

Well, tell me, Adelaide, what good is it to me, for instance — your marrying in the near future? Oh, well, I'll dance at your wedding. That's all very well! But then, immediately afterward, I'll lose

you. Or look at Agatha! She used to be so companionable and cheerful. Since her betrothal she's perturbed and solitary.

ADELAIDE

Is she really betrothed?

LUDOVICA

Why, would Ewald torment her so if she were not? You must all see that he does. He makes her really ill and melancholy. What do I care for your fine gentlemen if all they do is to make my sisters desert me and stop loving me? I simply feel immensely sorry for you both. You don't draw a breath except by *their* permission. And you used to be as free as the air!

ADELAIDE

[*Courtesying.*] *Au contraire!* It is only now that we are free.

[*The door next to the cupboard behind the girls is carefully opened and a man enters. His shoes are torn, his garments ragged; he carries a rough stick and wears a bold slouch-hat. From his shoulder hangs a leathern wallet. His goat-like face is covered with freckles, but it is not an uninteresting face. His head and beard are reddish. The age of* THE VAGABOND *is about thirty-five.*

THE VAGABOND

I'd like to venture a question.

ADELAIDE

[*Starts in fright.*] For heaven's sake! What do you want?

LUDOVICA

[*Has hastened to the bell-rope and pulls it violently.*]

THE VAGABOND

By God, my ladies, I don't want nothin' special. I'd only like to ask the question: Which is the way to Merseburg?

ADELAIDE

How did you succeed in getting in here?

THE VAGABOND

On my honour, I don't hardly know myself! First I had to climb through underbrush an' then I came down through a vinyard, then along a fine garden path, into a lovely entrance hall through a grand dining-room by way of a little flight o' stairs. An' now I'd like to go home.

[ADELAIDE *and* LUDOVICA *stare now at the strange intruder, now at each other. Finally they burst out into hearty laughter.*

LUDOVICA

And will you tell us where your home is? In our pantry, perhaps?

THE VAGABOND

No, Usinger is my home land.

ADELAIDE

Did you ever hear that name, Lux?

LUDOVICA

Non, mon enfant.

THE VAGABOND

Ce n'est rien que Silesie, mesdames.

ADELAIDE

You speak French?

THE VAGABOND

C'est ça. I was in Algeria for a year; I was in the foreign legion. But then I took to my heels.

LUDOVICA

[*Calls out through the window.*] There is Otto! Oh, Otto, do come up! We have a visitor from Algeria.

THE VAGABOND

I c'n show you my papers. *Parole d'honneur!* I ain't swindlin' you.

[*He rummages in his wallet which he quite boldly lays on the table.— Through the door near the chimney enters* OTTO KRANZ *the seventeen-year-old brother of* ADELAIDE'S *betrothed. His appearance betrays the conscious artist — buckled shoes, a fluttering tie, long hair.*

LUDOVICA

[*Merrily.*] Permit me, gentlemen, to introduce you to each other: Mr. Otto Kranz, *sculpteur du talent de Munic,* and . . .

THE VAGABOND

I was born to the name of Klemt! [*After a dignified bow.*] An' now mebbe I c'n get to business. This is a pretty old house. I could see from far off that it must be a pretty old shanty sticking its high roof out among the lindens and chestnuts and nut trees. An' old places like that are the very ones for me. Because, by profession, I'm an exterminator of varmint.

OTTO

[*Aloud.*] How did the fellow get in here?

THE VAGABOND

Fellow? Well, I do declare! You're badly mistaken! I follow my game like a regular retriever, I tell you. I always find somethin' an' I ain't often mistaken.

OTTO

Your trade is probably that of a beggar and tramp. Come! I'll help you to get out!

THE VAGABOND

An' you ain't got neither rats nor mice? Nor no vipers in your vinyard? An' no roaches? An' no varmint in the whole house? An' no black hussars, as you may call 'em?

OTTO

There's nothing here but a dog — a rather vicious St. Bernard.

THE VAGABOND

All right, then. I hope you'll pardon me! *C'est ça, mesdames.* [*Escorted by* OTTO *he starts to go. At the door he turns back once more and blinks cunningly at the gilt vessels that adorn the table.*] That's pretty goldsmith's work you got there! It makes an old highwayman's heart laugh!

[*He goes out followed by* OTTO.

ADELAIDE

[*Ironically.*] Otto isn't in a very good humour to-day. I had thought that fellow would amuse him.

LUDOVICA

Oh, I disturbed him while he was "working." He was drawing or composing poetry. Does your betrothed write verses, too?

ADELAIDE

[*Ironically.*] Unfortunately not. Otto considers himself the genius of the family.

LUDOVICA

Then I would have taken Otto.

ADELAIDE

That child?

LUDOVICA

[*About to hurry off meets* OTTO *and* SABINE *at the door.*]

SABINE

Did you see the gentleman? It was me he wanted! That was another offer of marriage! It's the fourth that uncle has spoiled for me! One of these days I'll pull his ears thoroughly. [*General merriment.*] Don't you know where Agatha is? Otto, didn't she sit for you this morning?

OTTO

Yes. Until half an hour ago I was modelling in the garden house in the vineyard. Then suddenly a post came and she got up just as suddenly and disappeared.

SABINE

I looked for her for at least half an hour in the garden.

ADELAIDE

Give me some money, Sabine. More packages have come.

SABINE

Look here, your trousseau is beggaring us.

ADELAIDE

Oh, we'll inherit some money from Grandmamma.

LUDOVICA

Perhaps Ewald has come and she is forced to copy out something again — one of the annual re-

ports of his silly Society for General Beautification. Or there's some matter connected with aunt Emily's property. He has her thoroughly in his claws.

SABINE

Fy, Lux. It isn't very nice to talk of claws. Moreover, he won't come out here until noon. He teaches till eleven. [*Softly to* ADELAIDE.] I want to tell you something quietly.

OTTO

Oh, if you please! Say it right out! I won't disturb you. [*He goes out.*

SABINE

Oh, Otto, why? Do please stay!

ADELAIDE

[*Curiously.*] Let him go! That won't hurt him! What is it?

SABINE

Oh, nothing. Only Doctor Grünwald is stopat the "Black Horse" in Naumburg with his old friend Kozakiewicz.

LUDOVICA

[*Who has crept up curiously.*] Who?

SABINE

Never mind. Go away, baby!

ADELAIDE

[*In extreme astonishment.*] Oh, no, Sabine, I can't believe that.

SABINE

That doesn't alter the facts. All you need do is to ask uncle.

[*She kneels down and rummages in one of the compartments of the cupboard.*

ADELAIDE

[*Wringing her hands in humorous despair.*] But my dear, for heaven's sake! What in the world is Agatha to do now?

LUDOVICA

What kind of business is this?

ADELAIDE

[*To* SABINE *with reference to* AGATHA.] Does *she* know? I imagine not. At least she gives no evidence.

ADELAIDE

Well, it's simply another case for uncle's intervention. The matter is past and done with.

LUDOVICA

If you people go on speaking in riddles, I'll feel myself quite superfluous.

SABINE

[*Merrily.*] So you are! March! Out with you!

LUDOVICA

I won't go at all. I'm quite old enough to know. If you really are my sisters you ought not to have any secrets from me.

ADELAIDE

Sabine, I don't believe what you tell me. It's just one of your jests. He's in America, heaven knows where, submerged and lost sight of!

SABINE

Very well. But just at present he's back, big as life, down in Naumburg.

LUDOVICA

If you think I don't know that story you're very badly mistaken.

SABINE

What story, silly?

LUDOVICA

Why was Agatha always so depressed? Because no letter came from him!

SABINE

[*Lightly.*] From whom, pray?

LUDOVICA

From that American.

SABINE

You're on the wrong track, my dear.

LUDOVICA

And so out of rage or heaven knows what she sold her soul to the schoolmaster.

SABINE

Hush, little girl! Don't talk nonsense. At bottom all that doesn't concern us in the least. Each human soul must look out for itself. You are old enough, by the way, and it may be better — don't you think so, Adelaide? — for you to be told the real state of affairs! You may then avoid the little lapses in tact which you commit through sheer ignorance. Agatha's sensitiveness is proverbial among us.

ADELAIDE

So it is true? Grünwald is really in Naumburg?

SABINE

He has asked uncle whether we would receive him.

ADELAIDE

And suppose he meets Ewald?

SABINE

Suppose he does! They're well-bred people.

LUDOVICA

I don't understand it all yet.

SABINE

I'll tell you if you'll take it quite seriously. Grünwald is a former surgeon in the navy. You

must have heard of him often. Papa talked about him a number of times. Well, there was something between him and Agatha. They met at the seashore in Sylt. You remember that papa, Agatha and I were in Westerland one summer.

ADELAIDE

Be careful! Agatha might hear us.

SABINE

Or Ewald. He's likely to come in at any moment.

LUDOVICA

They were really betrothed, then.

SABINE

Yes and no.

LUDOVICA

I don't see that.

ADELAIDE

They stood pledged to each other and yet, in a sense, they remained free.

SABINE

[*While all three girls stick their heads closer together with an air of secrecy.*] Listen, sweetheart, did you ever observe that Agatha bears a certain grudge in her soul against our dear papa?

LUDOVICA

Of course! You know that I once actually stormed at her. Papa's memory is the one thing I won't have touched.

SABINE

Agatha really doesn't do that. But papa said at that time to Grünwald that he should go and roam about the world for two or three years. Then, papa said, the proper time would come for the question which could not be answered now.

LUDOVICA

Oh, dear papa! I would have had to run away.

ADELAIDE

And now you can imagine how Agatha must have suffered in the meantime. Papa had forbidden letters. But the two made the verbal agreement to give each other a sign of love once a year.

SABINE

He was to write.

ADELAIDE

But he didn't. The time came and he was not heard from. Then papa died and yet no sign came. And next came her illness and Ewald's wooing and aunt Emily's machinations. . . .

SABINE

And now Grünwald is back again and may appear at any moment.

ADELAIDE

Sabine, surely, it was a jest of yours.

SABINE

[*Shrugging her shoulders.*] One doesn't jest in such matters! Think what you please, only don't let the cat out of the bag.

[*Enter the college professor,* DR. EWALD NAST. *He wears a frock coat and a black tie. His shoes shined but clumsy. His clothes, made by a provincial tailor have been well worn but are spotlessly kept.* NAST *carries a spring overcoat over his left arm: in his left hand he holds an umbrella, in his right a top hat. He has a cigar in his mouth.*

NAST

[*Whose demeanour has a touch of arrogance and self-righteous authoritativeness.*] Good-morning, girls. Magnificent day! I've just come from the dentist! Had a jaw tooth pulled! Three frightful roots. But I bore myself like Mucius Scaevola! But I must finish smoking my cigar. Tobacco, as you know, is a disinfectant. [*Jestingly to* LUDOVICA.] Isn't it so, my lady?

LUDOVICA

Also, as you know, it has an odour . . .!

NAST

That depends entirely on the cigar.

LUDOVICA

I suppose yours cost about a penny.

NAST

Better ones are to be had, without doubt! A man must adjust himself to his means. How is our dear Agatha?

SABINE

I have scarcely seen her to-day.

NAST

I will look after her presently myself. As I realise the coming event more clearly I find more and more pleasure in the thought of the coming marriage. My pupils had a written task to-day and while I was sitting at my desk I thought out something that will delight you, dear Adelaide. Something, I mean, for your great day.

ADELAIDE

Go ahead! I have no objection to being surprised.

NAST

Is your little brother-in-law adaptable? . . .

ADELAIDE

In what respect do you mean, Ewald?

NAST

In the first place I need some one to make a fair copy of my little play in verse. . . .

LUDOVICA

Copy your verses? Otto won't do that. He's too proud. He writes them himself.

NAST

Hoity-toity! Verse is hardly a play-thing for children. However, we won't grudge him the pleasure of riming "love" and "dove," if no one takes harm by it. After all, Agatha can make the copy for me. But I have another task for him.

ADELAIDE

Do discuss it with him in person, Ewald.

SABINE

I must go and look after my seamstresses anyhow. I have three of them in the house. If I see Otto I'll send him in.

NAST

He may condescend after all.

[*Exit* ADELAIDE.

NAST

[*Continuing.*] Otherwise I can take one of my fourth form boys. By the way, you should get rid of your gardener.

SABINE

Why?

NAST

Because he is froward and incompetent. I almost had a quarrel with him.

SABINE

Uncle thinks a very great deal of him.

NAST

Laissez aller — that is uncle's principle! I advise you to get rid of the gardener. You will come to it in spite of our excellent uncle and his deplorable good nature.

SABINE

What was the trouble with the gardener?

NAST

I must guard against talking too much. [*He touches his cheek.*] He behaves in the most unseemly way toward me on every occasion. And in addition he commits the most egregious follies.

SABINE

In what respect?

NAST

I call it madness, Sabine, to have a fellow working here — I mean in your garden — who is a more than suspicious character. This fellow was rendering the streets of Naumburg unsafe yesterday and finally climbed my two flights of stairs too. I explained the situation to him thoroughly. The man told me he was an executioner's assistant. And now the gardener has set him to catching moles.

SABINE

There are men in the house to protect us, Ewald.

NAST

If you insist on being foolish, I shall have to take the matter into my own hands. Either uncle puts

him out or I will give notice to the police. And it would be best if the gardener were to leave at the same time. He cheats you the moment you turn your eyes away.

SABINE

Papa always used to allow a definite sum against thievery.

NAST

Your father could do that. You should not. It's irresponsible management. One ought not exactly to throw money out of the window.

LUDOVICA

[*Stretching herself and walking out.*] If you have money, why not throw it away?

NAST

Oh! Oh! Well, upon my word! You people have sinned a good deal against Lux. The consequences of a want of strict and logical upbringing never fail to appear.

SABINE

But, Ewald, that's very harmless naughtiness.

EWALD

You won't believe me! You won't believe me! The child is given a criminal amount of liberty. Aunt Emily is quite right in that respect. Some day, I tell you, the punishment will overtake you.

SABINE

Dear me, but that sounds dreadful.

NAST

You imagine that you are responsible to no one because you live quite independently on your hill. You are in love with freedom and expansiveness. But if ever by chance you were to hear the things that are said of you at Naumburg you would realise that the world is not asleep and that no one is so independent that he can afford to sin against it in the slightest degree.

SABINE

Dear me! Dear me! What do you mean by all that?

NAST

My dear girl, don't let us dig up the tomahawk. I hope you do not misunderstand me. My excellent Agatha quite agrees with me. And I see the not very distant day on which you too who are really the brains of the family will come to see the necessity for preserving a golden mean in the management of one's life. [OTTO *enters.*] But now let us dedicate our minds to the preliminaries of delightful hours.— Tell me, thou young Adonis of sixteen summers! I have something for you! You are turning pale! Do not be frightened! I am not going to ask you to decline *mensa.* It is all about a jest.

OTTO

And am I quite indispensable to it?

NAST

No one is indispensable, my son. Listen to what I purpose. You know what a jest is?

OTTO

I hope so.

NAST

So do I. In that case we shall agree promptly. I have written a masque in verses. In this masque there are but two parts and the third . . .

SABINE

I thought there were only two!

NAST

And you, my young friend, are to take the third part. You do not know the *Peter Squenz* of Gryphius. So it behooves me to begin with Leda's egg.— This house used once to belong to the cathedral. The chapter owned it and the priests of the chapter were wont to live in it — Bishop Throta himself and other princes of the church. And the escutcheon which you see above the mantel shows a palm-donkey, a bishop's crozier and mitre. Now I am thinking of the ass . . .

SABINE

Is Otto to take the part of it?

NAST

The third very merry part is indeed not a speaking one and is, in a sense, that of the donkey.

[Sabine *is startled for a moment, then breaks out into ringing laughter.* Nast *is infected by it and laughs too, but not quite naturally.* Otto *is clearly fighting down his vexation over his injured feeling of sex-dignity and says quietly.*

Otto

The antics of a clown, professor, are not among my accomplishments. But since I am a sculptor I would gladly undertake to model a donkey from life and produce a good likeness. If any braying is to be done, the porter will perhaps serve.

Nast

Aha! I have again succeeded in wounding the arrogance and vanity of youth. There is no such thing as youth in these days.

Otto

That is probably to be ascribed to the educators of to-day.

Nast

Let us drop the subject! Let us have no controversies! It is not fitting for you! And it would be even less fitting for me to argue concerning serious questions with you. The disparity between our minds is too crass.

Otto

Why are you so familiar with me?

NAST

My friend, you are completely lacking in *naïveté*. Think of the Shrovetide plays! Think of Master Hans Sachs! Think of the old animal fable and of the weaver in the *Midsummer Night's Dream!* In order to represent a donkey true to nature one need not by any means be an ass oneself.

SABINE

Dear fellow workers at our feast, don't fall out with each other. It would be truly commendable to preserve one's good humour, since good humour is the purpose of it all.

NAST

This silly pride that cannot take a joke! This affectation of dignity! This immature pretentiousness! I know nothing more disagreeably painful!

SABINE

[*Putting her arm about* OTTO.] Come, we'll let our cousin enjoy his wrath. He is peculiarly irritable to-day. His pupils must have angered him.

NAST

[*With arrogant serenity.*] No, lovely cousin, you are quite in error. A school boy's prank does not annoy a wise man nor disturb the divine serenity of my mood.

SABINE *and* OTTO *withdraw.*

[AGATHA, *a beautifully built, well-developed but somewhat anæmic girl enters by the door at*

side of the cupboard. Her light blonde hair, simply parted in the middle, frames her sweet, oval, large-eyed face which has an expression of melancholy. Agatha's *movements are gentle and still. Her walk has something of the rhythm of flight. She is chilly and keeps a lace shawl wrapped about her.*

Agatha

Good morning, Ewald.

Nast

Ah, there you are! For heaven's sake! How you look!

Agatha

[*Looking down at her dress.*] Is the seam torn again?

Nast

Don't you feel well, my dear child?

Agatha

Why shouldn't I be feeling well, cousin?

Nast

Cousin! What a way of addressing me!

Agatha

Is it not a name that belongs to you?

Nast

Well, dear one, I am willing to resign my claim to it. And I will not call you cousin either. But do tell me, finally, what is wrong with you?

AGATHA

Why? I do not know what to answer you.

NAST

You have been weeping.

AGATHA

I have not been weeping at all, dear Ewald. But suppose I have! Why should I not?

NAST

You see that I am utterly confused. I cannot recover myself. What has suddenly happened to you?

AGATHA

Nothing. Nothing at all, Ewald. Not the slightest thing. I have just been taking a walk with uncle Gustav . . .

NAST

And what was the subject of your conversation?

AGATHA

Nothing that could possibly interest you.

NAST

Aha? And you imagine that you can get rid of me so easily?

AGATHA

Oh, please, Ewald! Do you know that you are tormenting me? You must give me a little peace.

NAST

When did I ever disturb your peace? If you do not care to see me now, you need but say so. You have every claim on one's consideration, both as a patient and as one who is convalescing.

AGATHA

[*Moving swiftly up and down.*] I am not ill any longer. Do let that be! Why must you tell me that daily? I am like all other people and ask no whit more tenderness.

NAST

The old error and the old trouble! If my advice has any value in your eyes and the future toward which we are hastening — I am sorry, but I must speak so — then let us, I beg of you once again, let us come forward at last with some fixed determination. The present condition means torment for both of us.

AGATHA

Ah, that old urgency again!

NAST

Yes, and I am urging you quite consciously. I can wait; I am not impatient; I do not doubt the quality of your character. Nor is the splendour of your financial position a circumstance that has any weight with me. My wants are simple and my income suffices. It is not that! But we are on the lips of all men . . . and I cannot imagine what we

are waiting for. Or, perhaps, Agatha, you are only playing with me?

AGATHA

How can you think such a thing of me?

NAST

Very well. Nor do I really think it. I am really convinced of the contrary. Forward, then! Let us not delay or hesitate.— You are silent now. And every time I have mentioned this matter you have opposed the same silence to my words. I cannot interpret that silence.

AGATHA

[*After a pause.*] Ewald, you need a wife of greater capability . . . one, at least, who is different. What will you do with a girl like myself who is so little at one with herself, so unpractical and so strangely brought up? You can believe me: you do not know me!

NAST

All that you suffer from is a certain pusillanimity — nothing but that. The other matter is my affair; I am willing to take the risk. If you feel any kindness toward me, we can disregard all else. And so, dearest Agatha [*he takes her hand,*] make up your mind!

AGATHA

[*Moved and thus mastering an inner revulsion.*] Well, Ewald, at a time when really no soul on earth took any care of me, when I was physically and spiritually crushed, you alone of all people were

anxious for my welfare. You alone made my suffering yours. Very well, then: I must not remain your debtor. You take me in payment. So be it. You yourself, however, must take the responsibility as to whether this step be for your own good. But there is one thing I beg of you . . . some one . . . Doctor Grünwald has appeared again. I have never spoken to you . . . perhaps you have heard whispers . . . He must not come up here under any circumstances. At all events I cannot see him again.— And from that you must protect me, Ewald. You must not let me break this determination.

NAST

How? What? You know me! I will take all necessary measures.

CURTAIN

THE SECOND ACT

A very high room. The proportionately tall windows to the left are hung with heavy curtains of red damask. So is a glass door between the windows which opens upon a terrace. There is one door in the back wall, another in the right. The wall-paper is also dark red. The ceiling is of stucco, painted and gilt. To the right, above the sofa, in a heavy gold frame, hang the life sized portraits of the dead parents of the Ruschewey *girls. The sofa, the large, oval table, the writing desk, armchair, the sewing table near one window, the grand piano, as well as a small table filled with flowers in bloom, are all of mahogany and in rococo style. The floor is entirely covered by a dark carpet. The upholstery of the chairs is of green plush. The corner of the room between the two doors shows a tall, quaint seventeenth-century chimney piece with angular carving.*

It is forenoon as in the previous act. The sun shines in at the windows. Chinese vases, bric-a-brac and bronzes are placed here and there and heavily gilt candelabra on marble columns. A candelabrum adorned with prisms of glass.

Sitting not far from each other at the table

are Agatha *and* Ludovica, *the latter reading, the former over a piece of embroidery.*

Agatha

What is it you are reading?

Ludovica

[*Laughing.*] Really, Otto isn't so stupid after all. For Adelaide's betrothal eve he's preparing a pantomime, and he has written out a scenario which is very amusing! — Will you please tell me why you utter such heartbreaking sighs?

Agatha

I?

Ludovica

Aren't you conscious of it at all?

Agatha

I dreamed of papa again last night.

Ludovica

Was it a good dream or a bad one?

Agatha

Neither. It was strange! He seemed to be climbing about the old walls up in the vineyard. I knew that he had died and you may imagine how my heart throbbed. I cried: "Papa!" and ran up to him. But when I threw my arms about him or, rather, tried to throw my arms about him — I couldn't do it! I felt a painful sense of resistance.

And when, with unspeakable bitterness of spirit, I desisted and, as it seems to me, looked at him, horrified — yes, horrified and questioningly too — I heard him utter these words: "Agatha, you have a desperate heart!"

Ludovica

I never dream any but dear things of papa.

Agatha

If it weren't for Adelaide's sake, I'd prefer to absent myself from the festivities of her wedding. I'm out of place among happy people.

Ludovica

But, dear Agatha, why so?

Agatha

Please, Lux, be still! I've heard footsteps.

Ludovica

Oh, I'm enraged, enraged, I tell you!

Agatha

No, I didn't, it seems. I suppose I was mistaken. Or else it was only the gardener.

Ludovica

I hope not — that bull in china shop.

Agatha

What do you mean?

LUDOVICA

Oh, it's only a manner of speaking! But, dear Agatha, I love you so dearly! I've always really adored you. You were always the most beautiful among us. Otto says that you are a genuine beauty. And how at times we used to laugh together and make fun of all the world! And now you're like a wax doll, you don't laugh, you don't speak, you have bad dreams and you're melancholy. Why don't you be happy? Why don't you amuse yourself? We're all happy and amused.

AGATHA

I'm not surprised at you. Unhappily, I can't share in it. No, there are times when I am surprised at the joyousness, the festiveness . . . It all gives me a feeling of dread, a fear that rises to actual physical pain in my heart.

LUDOVICA

Did you ever tell your physician about that?

AGATHA

Don't mention physicians to me, of all people. They want you to avoid everything you like, to swallow iron and milk by the quart.

LUDOVICA

You ought to drink Kulmbacher beer.

AGATHA

[*Half amused, laughs, and then continues.*] I wonder if grandmamma is out of bed yet?

LUDOVICA

She breakfasted three quarters of an hour ago. The dear old lady travels in grand style, I tell you. Twelve mighty trunks have arrived.

[*Through the door that leads to the terrace, dressed exactly as in the first act,* NAST *comes in. His mood is very jovial.*]

NAST

I salute you, beautiful ladies! What are you girls talking about so eagerly?

AGATHA

We were just talking about grandmamma.

NAST

Did she really take the long journey?

AGATHA

She arrived last night.

NAST

Adelaide and her betrothed may really be proud of that! Thus only does their union receive a proper background, so to speak. Your uncle would scarcely have sufficed to give it that.

[LUDOVICA *rises as though about to go.*]

NAST

Stay! Do I drive you away again, child? I must tell you that I drove her away last night. She was practicing on her violin up in the vineyard

in the little chapel built of bark. Well, near that is the old tower and the old ruined well with the subterranean passage. As it happened, an old friend of my student days, the art historian Ostermann, was visiting me, a man of the most admirable erudition, and so since it was quite in his line, I showed him your most interesting ruins. In the enthusiasm of research we two scholars probably waxed rather loud and the fairy of the violin withdrew, not without indignation, it seemed to me, from her refuge.

Ludovica

It's horrid in this house anyhow nowadays. Wherever one goes, one is made to feel superfluous.

[*She goes out.*

Nast

[*After a hearty laugh.*] Ostermann is a bachelor, by the way, and I can assure you that he took no common interest in the fleeting vision of Lux hastening away.— And now let us adjust the one matter of immediate moment. You know what I mean. Well, my dear girl, *that* question is definitely settled. You will have no further cause for disquiet. [Agatha *bends lower over her embroidery.*] I didn't permit any nonsense to stand in my way. I did not, of course, infringe upon the proprieties. But I took the bull by the horns. That is to say that yesterday, without delay, so soon as I received your commission and returned to Naumburg after dinner, I simply called upon these two gentlemen, Dr. Grünwald and Dr. Kozakiewicz, in their hotel. I am bound to say that they were sensible and showed real insight and made the impression of

gentlemen who were able to estimate the true nature of the situation. Our parting was cordial and quite harmonious.

AGATHA

[*Without looking up.*] What did you say to the gentlemen?

NAST

That arose from the moment and the situation as it shaped itself. I haven't a clear recollection of the details. They knew that your father had died. I said that just at present your house was in considerable confusion and that many circumstances had, so to speak, undergone a decisive change. Of course I stressed the word "decisive" particularly, nor did that emphasis fail of its effect. With the utmost tact, of course, I insinuated that, under the existing conditions, a meeting could not be other than painful and should be avoided in any case.

AGATHA

Well, and what did they answer you?

NAST

Their answer was the soul of propriety, of course. They had merely come, they said, to see the magnificent sculptures of Wechesburg in our cathedral. He seems, by the way, to be an industrious anthropologist. Plates were hanging about. I saw a genuine negro skull and a kind of *pithecanthropus erectus,* and I was near giving him permission to take some measurements of me, since my head seemed to interest him and he seemed to place some value on the permission.— But now, Agatha, I must

lay claim to a special proof of your confidence in me. Why did the reappearance of this Dr. Grünwald move you so visibly? And what reason have you to fear him?

AGATHA

I fear no one except myself, dear Ewald.

NAST

This answer is somewhat dark, my dearest. Could you not speak a little more plainly?

AGATHA

Unfortunately nothing seems to be very clear within me.

NAST

What I ask of you, Agatha, is after all no more than our relations give me the right to ask. You should have no secrets from me.

AGATHA

[*Shaking her head gently.*] That isn't possible! I can't do that, dear Ewald.

NAST

So you are unwilling to tell me what was the character of this incident at the sea-shore? Do you think I did not know that it always hovered over me? Do you believe it was quite unknown to me?

AGATHA

No, no, aunt Emily took care of that, no doubt.

NAST

Aunt Emily is discretion itself. And so you will not be frank with me?

AGATHA

[*Draws forth a little letter that has been concealed in her bosom.*] For all I care, I can let you see this letter. But there's nothing very particular in it. Read it. It really doesn't matter, after all.

NAST

[*Before reading.*] Aha, something occurs to me, my dear child. I say it merely for the sake of order and regularity. If you should happen to see Sabine — I pre-expended two shillings to the postman for her. If the matter happens to be forgotten, no harm will have been done. [*He reads.*] The same old phrases! The threadbare heroics! His intentions are not exactly impenetrable.

AGATHA

[*Arises, blushing a deep red.*] No, Ewald . . . let be . . . I can't endure that!

[*She hastens out.*

NAST

Agatha, what have I done again now? [*Alone now.*] Everywhere the same damnable, ridiculous sentimentality.

[*He walks back and forth excitedly.*

[MR. RUSCHEWEY *ushers in* DR. GRÜNWALD *and* DR. KOZAKIEWICZ.

RUSCHEWEY

If you please, gentlemen, won't you enter?

[*The gentlemen have evidently been engaged in a cheerful conversation. Laughing they enter the room. But the merriment of* DR. GRÜNWALD *seems not quite genuine. He as well as* DR. KOZAKIEWICZ *are faultlessly dressed: top hats and frock coats.* GRÜNWALD *is tall, sinewy, bronzed and has a small blond moustache.* KOZAKIEWICZ *is a German Pole. He wears spectacles with round lenses. The preponderant expression of his face is one of delicate irony.*

KOZAKIEWICZ

[*In a lively fashion, with a very slight Polish accent.*] It is astonishing, the striking resemblance of Mr. Ruschewey to his late brother.

RUSCHEWEY

Ah, there is Ewald! Permit me to introduce . . .

KOZAKIEWICZ

In his laughter, in every gesture, in his manner of speech.

RUSCHEWEY

Well, then: Dr. Nast—Dr. Grünwald, Dr. Kozakiewicz, old friends of my late brother Bertold Ruschewey.

[NAST, *perplexed in the extreme, bows stiffly and coldly. He cannot conceal his*

astonishment and indignation. Grünwald's *salutation is very earnest. He regards* Nast *with a calm and determined look. About the mouth of the German Pole the incident seems to bring forth a twitching as of suppressed merriment.*

Nast

[*With emphasis.*] I am astonished, gentlemen, to see you here.

Ruschewey

Ah, so you gentlemen are acquainted with one another!

Nast

No, that is to say, our contact was a very fleeting one indeed.

Kozakiewicz

You were in the cathedral with another gentleman. The latter was, unmistakably, a German professor. We were just climbing into the choir-loft.

Nast

Assuredly! Yes!

Kozakiewicz

I count those sculptures in the cathedral among the most entirely admirable things I know. I have never seen anything that was more purely conceived, not even among the vaunted works of Italy. It's incomprehensible, one must confess, that the Germans do not make pilgrimages to the remnants of this art which approaches the Greek in serenity,

as to a fountain of youth. And what strikes me especially is that not even Goethe, so far as I know, seems to have been cognisant of or appreciated this miracle of the most perfect beauty, near to him as it was.

NAST

I am not in a position to give an opinion of the matter.

KOZAKIEWICZ

When one emerges suddenly from the magic life of this lofty choir into the modern city life about the cathedral, one feels . . . one feels a kind of consternation — so empty, so insignificant it all seems about one. We are condemned, so to speak, to an unescapable absence of charm.

NAST

On that point it would be my duty to contradict you had I the least intention or inclination of taking part in this discussion.

RUSCHEWEY

To me, gentlemen, those figures in the cathedral are, I had almost said, living creatures. We have lived with them day by day. Our father was a very imaginative man. And he was organist in the cathedral, as you know. He always asserted that he played almost never to the congregation but devoted his fugues to the sandstone ladies and gentlemen in the choir.

KOZAKIEWICZ

A charming fancy and one that I quite understand. I can truly say, I wish I had lived in that

age in which artists placed on their bases these dainty, violet romanic columns about this winding stairway which leads to the holy-loft. The way in which the round column is placed upon its square base has a subtle charm of its own.

RUSCHEWEY

Yes, and it's a lost art to-day. My brother Bertold — you were trying just now to establish the fact of a resemblance between my brother and myself! — well, he was an entirely different kind of fellow. My brother Bertold thought quite as my father did. He seemed to himself to have come into the world six hundred years too late. And it was, privately, a kind of fixed idea with him that, at least for himself and a few intimates, he might revive something of the spirit of that age.

KOZAKIEWICZ

And he seems to have succeeded.

RUSCHEWEY

You know how such things usually go in this world. Something, much indeed, was realised. Many a wish that seemed impossible of fulfilment; as, for instance, Bertold's success in purchasing this old property. And yet the actual gains made didn't answer, when made, entirely to the aim of his striving.

KOZAKIEWICZ

Which means that our yearning must always remain yearning; reality always remains unidentified with it.

RUSCHEWEY

However, Bertold had a talent for good luck. Whatever he attempted in business succeeded and brought him honour and profit. And to the very last his spirit was full of cheerful zest and always inclined toward the cult of joy.

KOZAKIEWICZ

It is that zest for life in the nobler sense that I always thought of as filling his admirable domestic life.

RUSCHEWEY

Irritation and depression seemed actual sins to him.

NAST

Forgive me, uncle. But I find myself somewhat in contradiction with that view. Uncle Bertold scarcely inherited the eccentric character of the old organist. After all, his nature fitted him for practical pursuits.

RUSCHEWEY

Two souls lived side by side in my brother's character. But you don't understand that.

NAST

Do you think so? I believe you are mistaken, uncle. I merely desired to prevent a turbid idea of the spirit of this house — which must be, at present, largely a spirit of grief for its departed founders — from being communicated to these gentlemen.

RUSCHEWEY

Well, then suppose you communicate it, dear Ewald.

NAST

Heaven forbid. I mustn't anticipate the explanations of the guardian of the young ladies.

RUSCHEWEY

Anticipate them by all means. I won't be at all backward in anticipating your anticipations.

NAST

Ah, you even play on words, uncle Ruschewey.

[SABINE *in a lively and apparently very happy mood comes through the door in the rear with a bunch of keys at her girdle. She at once goes up to* GRÜNWALD *and stretches out her hands in greeting.*

SABINE

I can scarcely trust my eyes . . . Company! Company has come, my little brother-in-law Otto was just saying to me. But who was to think of such company? The age of miracles is supposed to be over!

GRÜNWALD

[*Pale and deeply moved.*] I suppose we come very much amiss?

SABINE

[*Apparently quite innocently.*] But why? Not in the least. And when did you arrive? Where do you live? Where did you come from?

GRÜNWALD

I've come from very far away, dear lady, all the way, in fact, from South America, and at present we two, my old friend Kozakiewicz and I, are stopping at the "Horse" in Naumburg.

SABINE

Ah, yes, that's very remarkable. And where have you been, dear doctor, since we saw you waving your handkerchief in farewell on the bridge?

KOZAKIEWICZ

Thank you for asking. I've been in this same sorry old body of mine.

SABINE

[*Laughing.*] Is that an answer?

KOZAKIEWICZ

It is the mere truth. That's all. Look at my friend Grünwald. Doesn't he actually look like South America? My appearance confirms the information I've given you.

SABINE

It's true. Mr. Grünwald looks splendid. He's as dark as an ancient Roman made of bronze.

RUSCHEWEY

While you were in South America did you hear anything, by chance, of the ancient treasure of gold of the Incas?

SABINE

[*Laughing.*] But uncle dear, don't always be so greedy!

GRÜNWALD

No. And I myself sought treasures of an entirely different kind. But I regret to say that I wasn't happy in that search either.

SABINE

Alas, gentlemen, what does that mean? It has a very melancholy sound! How unfortunate that our papa is no longer alive. He would at once prescribe something invigorating. By the way, uncle, perhaps you know the proper prescription.

RUSCHEWEY

Assuredly. And the moment for its use will come. And you arrived very opportunely, for our wine harvest begins this morning. [*From the garden several pistol reports are heard.*] Listen there, it's beginning.

SABINE

An hour ago Otto brought ten or twelve old cavalry pistols out of papa's collection of weapons to the vintner's hut.

NAST

[*Excitedly but softly to* SABINE.] I am very much troubled, Sabine. Matters can't go on this way.

SABINE

[*Softly.*] Why not?

NAST

Because these doings will lead to the clinking of glasses in this house; and the year of mourning is not yet passed.

SABINE

[*Shrugs her shoulders.*

KOZAKIEWICZ

Ah, how sorry I am. And how moved. This report moves me deeply, Miss Sabine! I don't know why. And yet I do. For it makes me think of your father. He loved the gathering of the grape. He invited us for that occasion. Well, we are here and he is not with us.

RUSCHEWEY

Yes, one sometimes feels like an interloper. One lives and enjoys the light of the sun; one drinks Bertold's wine and loves his children. [*With simple cordiality he gives each of the gentlemen one of his hands.*] My friends, he would have been very happy.

SABINE

Come, gentlemen, I'll show you something that will probably give you real pleasure — a passage in papa's diary in which he mentioned you with deep appreciation.

[*She beckons* GRÜNWALD *and* KOZAKIEWICZ *to follow her and leads them out through*

the same door by which she entered. Ruschewey *takes out his pipe and fills it.* Nast *walks back and forth with growing excitement.*

Nast

[*Remains standing, a book in his hand.*] I must confess, I am dumbfounded.

Ruschewey

[*Slightly shocked.*] Hm! You actually frighten one, Ewald.

Nast

And this, uncle . . . all this you will endure?

Ruschewey

My dear fellow, what has happened again?

Nast

My word goes for nothing in this house. My uninterrupted efforts for the weal of the girls and the fair fame of the house are utterly unrecognised. I can counsel and seek to prevent the unseemly, yet one folly after another is committed.

Ruschewey

Look here, you'd better drink a bottle of seltzer.

Nast

Uncle, you can't get rid of me that way. You had better simply answer me one question: Why do these gentlemen . . . by what right . . . how

was it possible for them to cross this threshold? It offends true decency, good manners; it breaks every propriety and is against the opinion of the girls themselves.

RUSCHEWEY

Now look at me! Do I really look like what you take me for? How old do you think I am? I don't wish to affront you or to underestimate your worth: Your ability, your industry, your behaviour — your entire professional life may be as exemplary as you please. But you mustn't cut such capers as this. You will kindly consider these gentlemen as *my* guests, for they are here at my instigation.

NAST

And you don't ask what Agatha's attitude is?

RUSCHEWEY

No, for she isn't of age yet and I have my private opinions on this matter.

[*He has lit his pipe and steps out on the verandah.*

NAST

[*Alone.*] So that's the way. [*Involuntarily speaking to himself.*] Well, then a man knows where he's at.— I did permit myself to be deceived. — No, aunt Emily, you were quite right.— There's no reckoning with uncle in this matter.— Well, even so.— But you were quite right, aunt Emily.— If I had only . . . it's a fact, aunt Emily.— It may be so. But let us wait!

[*He sits down by the table in such a way*

that his back is to the terrace door. Restlessly whispering he drums with his fingers on the table or, following a habit, on a spot on his head where the hair is thinning. Unnoticed by him the Vagabond *enters who appeared in the first act. His whole demeanour has changed somewhat and taken on an amusing air of affectation. He holds two fingers stuck between the buttons of his waistcoat, assumes a position that seems dignified to him and stares at the ceiling. As* Nast *takes no notice of him for a while, he coughs without changing his posture.* Nast, *badly frightened, swings around.*

Nast

Fellow, what does this mean? What do you want here? You had better get out as quickly as possible! Do you understand me, or are you deaf? Well, then I'll turn over the office of turning you out to others!

[*He approaches the bell.*

The Vagabond

[*Makes a deep bow before* Nast *and at once reassumes, quite stiffly, his old posture.*

Nast

Aha! Now I recognise you! You carried on your tricks in Naumburg day before yesterday. You had thought out a plan for swindling fearful people out of money: you said you were an exe-

cutioner. That didn't impress me in the least and you have the wrong man before you now too.

THE VAGABOND

[*Bows as before and again stands in his former position.*

NAST

All very well. But I have no time. We have no employment for an executioner here. Or have you any other calling? And I give no alms on principle.

THE VAGABOND

[*Does not move.*

NAST

Now my patience is at an end. Man, I'll have you thrown in gaol this minute, I'll . . .

THE VAGABOND

[*With extreme suddenness. His manner is very lively and very cordial.*] No, let's stick to the subjec', sir, let's stick to the subjec'! One thing after another, sir. That's the way. No, no, no! An' these here things are important!

NAST

[*Taken aback and now attentive.*] What do you mean? Did any one send you?

THE VAGABOND

[*As before.*] You'll find out who's sendin' me, sir! These here things are important, sir.— I'm

a man all to myself, sir. Nobody ain't sent me! I don't let nobody send me, no, not to no king!

NAST

What is your name and what are you.

THE VAGABOND

[*Pompously.*] I'm a man what understands life.

NAST

You're not without humour, my friend, but I have enough of your kind.

THE VAGABOND

[*Warningly.*] Don't send me away, professor.

NAST

How do you know that I'm a professor?

THE VAGABOND

How I know it? That's the kind o' thing a man knows.

NAST

That doesn't appeal to me as very illuminating.

THE VAGABOND

That's because . . . Now you listen carefully to what I says. Because I . . . an' I ain't sayin' nothin' but the truth . . . because I . . . because I knows the secret!

NAST

[*As is observable in his manner, is suddenly convinced that he's dealing with a lunatic, and looks about him for help.*] I'm quite willing to admit that. But I'm not fond of secrets.

THE VAGABOND

What did you say about that there old well?

NAST

I'm supposed to have said something about a well?

THE VAGABOND

I knows what I knows! I heard it. I been inside o' the mountains. I heard the iron dog bark. He barked an' I barked. We barked together. Because you see, I c'n bark like a dog.

NAST

I can dispense with that talent of yours too.

THE VAGABOND

Maybe so. But maybe not with this here!
[*He takes from his pocket the fragment of a rosary from which hangs a small crucifix of ivory.*

NAST

[*Interested but without coming forth from behind the chair.*] What's that? What have you there?

THE VAGABOND

It ain't stolen. It's found! What'll you bet where I found that?

NAST

Let me see the thing!

THE VAGABOND

Go slow there! No pocketin' it!

NAST

Give it to me! No nonsense! I am not one of your stripe! [*He takes the crucifix, holds it in his hand and contemplates it.*] That is genuine, old ivory carving. How did you get hold of it?

THE VAGABOND

It's all quite natural. I ain't had no dealin's with the devil. I c'n do a thing or two — that's all. I says a little prayer, I turns around, I spits two or three times into my hand, I mix a little sand with the spittle, I steps on it an'— one, two, three — I finds somethin'!

NAST

[*Puzzled, thoughtful and shaking his head, looks now at the* VAGABOND, *now at the crucifix in his hand.*] You'll have to prove that to me first. I have my own theory for the present. It is quite within the realm of probability that an object of this kind should come to the light of day right here on the grounds of our own property.

THE VAGABOND

Yes, that's right enough, sir.

NAST

And what will you take for it?

THE VAGABOND

Nothin'! I ain't goin' to sell that little cross.

NAST

Is that so? And you're firmly determined on that? That alters matters entirely. I believe that the gardener put you to work temporarily. I suppose you are to exterminate mice and rats?

THE VAGABOND

I'm very good too at killin' varmint on the vines.

NAST

Very well, if that be so and you have been creeping about, heaven knows where, in the vineyard, in the cellars, in the attics, the supposition presents itself, without much sagacity, that this adornment either is the actual property of this house or else was found on the land of the estate and is thus the property of the owner. In spite of that I have no desire to be unduly rigorous. Hence I ask you again: Will you sell the little cross?

THE VAGABOND

I'll give it away; I won't sell it!

NAST

What? You expect me to accept a gift from you?

THE VAGABOND

You c'n go an' give me somethin' in return.

NAST

Very well. Let us make a contract then. Understand me rightly now: You are to take me to the spot where, upon your honest affirmation, you found this. I . . .

THE VAGABOND

It's the old well.

NAST

In the old cistern on the hill?

THE VAGABOND

By the mouse tower, in the old cistern. That's what I told you before.

NAST

Aha! I'm beginning to see light! I suppose you overheard us yesterday, my own humble self, namely, and the other professor. The cistern, ah yes, and the tower! We subjected all that ruined magnificence to scrutiny. And I said that with the proper instinct and intelligence many a happy find might be made here.

THE VAGABOND

Exackly! That's right. An' you're right too. I'd take my holy oath on that, professor.

NAST

Here are three shillings for you.

THE VAGABOND

Six'd serve the same purpose.

NAST

Here are five shillings, but I demand secrecy of you. Do you understand? Have you heard? Furthermore: come to me to-morrow afternoon at six and we two, quite alone, will climb up to the old ruins once more. We can meet below near the summer house. Are you agreed? For heaven's sake, man, can't you answer?

THE VAGABOND

D'you see now that I c'n be silent?

NAST

It's a bargain, then. And now hurry away from here.

CURTAIN

THE THIRD ACT

The same room as in the second act. It is the following afternoon. KOZAKIEWICZ *sits at the grand piano.* LUDOVICA, *holding her violin, is at the music stand.*

KOZAKIEWICZ

Well, we did that very beautifully. The old violin has a quality of tone which is indescribable. It fairly radiates. I had the sensation now of a warm and dark radiance, now of one that is soft and of fiery gold. And your playing, my dear little lady . . . ah, when I speak of the tone, how much of it is due to the instrument, and how much to the player? One ought evidently, to be worthy of the other. And that perfect concord, my dear Miss Lux — and therefore I offer you my compliments — is here achieved.

LUDOVICA

It is said to have been a festive occasion whenever grandfather played the violin in the cathedral. Its tone carries so wonderfully far! It is said to have sounded to the remotest corner of the great church. To this day there is living over in Naumburg an old and distant relative of ours, a retired clergyman. He is over ninety and has outlived three of his successors in office. And this old man

weeps whenever he speaks of the times when our grandfather played the violin.

KOZAKIEWICZ

And is it certainly the same instrument?

LUDOVICA

Undoubtedly. A piece has been put in up here, and a second small repair which you see here on the back is said to date from Stradivarius himself. Papa himself played the violin a little and at once recognised the instrument in the antiquary's shop.

KOZAKIEWICZ

The romantic theft of the instrument might have occurred in the tales of Hoffmann. And a violin has, *per se*, something mystical about it: an old box topped with singing sheep's entrails! And yet it holds so unspeakably divine a soul. And now take, especially, this noble old heirloom. Your grandfather loved it like a child and, raising it to a second life from destruction, mourned and sought it as though it were a child. And finally this man's son resurrects it for a second time out of a junk shop in Amsterdam.

LUDOVICA

Grandfather went on journeys for its sake, and later papa did the same. They both desired to hunt down the burglars. In every dancing hall they listened for that familiar voice. Papa always said that our "little sister" had fared beyond the Thuringian forest, down the Main river, past

Frankfort, and by way of Cologne on and on and finally across the sea to the new world, to the great burial place of old violins.

KOZAKIEWICZ

It was preserved for a different destiny. It was written in the book of fate that two true sisters were to enjoy the lot of a wonderful reunion.

LUDOVICA

Yes, we understand each other, the violin and I. And I won't give it up again.

KOZAKIEWICZ

Well, whoever wanted to rob you of it now would be a criminal ten times as great as those first thieves.

LUDOVICA

Oh, aunt Emily often hints that we ought to sell the violin.

KOZAKIEWICZ

The lady who was visiting here to-day?

LUDOVICA

Certainly.

KOZAKIEWICZ

And is she really the sister of your father?

LUDOVICA

Yes, his own sister.

KOZAKIEWICZ

I'm surprised at that.

LUDOVICA

They never understood each other. Yet she is really his sister.

KOZAKIEWICZ

If I may take the liberty of saying something about this lady: You say your father and she never understood each other. Well, I should be surprised to hear the contrary. It is different with your uncle. He is really animated by the same spirit which dwelled in your father. In regard to the violin he said to me: In the old cathedrals there is often found, not far from the tabernacle, a pelican of brass or gilt as a symbol of the church, because this bird, according to the legend, pierces its own breast to feed its young on its life-blood — even as the church is supposed to do. Now when his father played the violin in the organ loft and the two brothers, Bertold and Gustav, sat together in the nave, they often said to each other: the pelican sings. Thus it seemed to them. Now I take it that the old Protestant lady in there [*he points to the door at the right*] never heard the pelican sing?

LUDOVICA

No, I believe she considers all such things unsound affectations.

KOZAKIEWICZ

When one sees you hop about with your young, handsome, immature brother-in-law, one has no suspicion of the real seriousness of your soul.

Ludovica

Oh, I'm not really serious. I'd like to be dancing all day.

Kozakiewicz

And I would like to be the while — what is the saying? — a little mouse.

Ludovica

If there is no one to hold me, I would dance until my heart stands still.

Kozakiewicz

May your heart fulfill its sweet and divine duty *allegro con amore* for many decades along a path full of flowers.

Ludovica

And may yours do the same.

Kozakiewicz

Ah, its duties are neither sweet nor divine and it may stop on well nigh any day. Ah, laugh, laugh, you beautiful child. You may laugh me to scorn with all your heart, or, what would be better, laugh me out of the world. But what is the use of all this? [*He plays several wild measures of a Mazurka.*] If you are fond of dancing — dance! I will play Polish music to your dancing.

[*He plays in masterly fashion a Mazurka of Chopin, op. 24, No. 4.*

[Grünwald *enters from the terrace. He carries a light summer overcoat over his arm and in his hand a Spanish cane. He*

stands still, upon entering, careful not to disturb the playing. He listens and observes how Ludovica *falls involuntarily into the rhythm of the music and sways in the figure of an improvised dance.*

Kozakiewicz

[*Still playing, to* Ludovica.] Bravo! Splendid! Admirable! You dance with wonderful talent.

Grünwald

[*Applauds gently and with a rather serious look. When* Kozakiewicz *has finished playing, he speaks.*] Really, you do dance admirably.

Ludovica

Not half good enough for an audience.

Kozakiewicz

Does one ever dance for oneself alone?

Ludovica

At times. Why not? Once in a while I climb into a loft and dance for a quarter of an hour. I really oughtn't to on account of our mourning. But you won't . . .

Grünwald

This was an utterly unexpected delight.

Kozakiewicz

He says that with his most solemn expression, [Ludovica *laughs*] as though he had swallowed a

bitter pill and were now expressing his conviction that the medicine is excellent.

Grünwald

Why don't you say "poison" and have done?

Kozakiewicz

Consider what has become of this bold knight who for thirteen months wore feathers behind his ears, hunted with the savage Bakairi and dwelled in elliptical huts.— Have you been lying in the heather again and writing verses?

Grünwald

My white suit would alone make such a supposition impossible, my facetious friend.

Kozakiewicz

For you must know that he is descended from the old "minnesinger," Grünwald, and suffers from attacks of atavism.

[*From afar is heard the sound of a small bell swiftly rung.*

Ludovica

[*Pricking up her ears at once.*] The little bell! I must climb up and meet Otto. We agreed to meet in the chapel.

[*She runs out swiftly.*

Kozakiewicz

She flutters away like a butterfly.

[*A silence falls.* Kozakiewicz *plays a brief variation on the melody of* "Ah, is

it possible?" Grünwald *sits down carelessly.*

Grünwald

Well, what do we want here anyhow?

Kozakiewicz

[*Raises his fingers from the keys and laughs.*

Grünwald

Man alive, don't laugh now, for heaven's sake! Try to imagine my state of mind and show a bit of understanding.

Kozakiewicz

With all my heart, dear boy! Certainly.

Grünwald

Well, then, tell me yourself: What are we waiting for? These frightful humiliations! Here I am, conscious of being quite superfluous. I wait like a beggar who is becoming blunted and troublesome and no hand is open for him.

Kozakiewicz

I wouldn't put it quite so crassly.

Grünwald

If one had a spark of decency left, a spark of decency and self-respect, one wouldn't stick here like a burr, in spite of the fact that everything is over and decided. Instead of that we come up here day after day. I stop up my ears; I pre-

tend to take no hint. Systematically I develop a thick skin. I creep, actually, tremble when a window rattles, and the sight of a blue silk shawl, emerging for a mere gleam, robs me of all reason. I must get away! I can't endure it any longer!

KOZAKIEWICZ

Very well, let us leave!

GRÜNWALD

[*In consternation and agony.*] But, my dear fellow, I can't do that, you know.

[*He presses his hands against his forehead.*

KOZAKIEWICZ

[*After a silence.*] Well, then there's nothing left for us but to stick it out.

GRÜNWALD

Yet, tell me what is there left to wait for? I've carried this affair in my heart . . . carried it around in my inmost heart. It was so sacred to me. I did not stir it. Very well! She, on the contrary, forgot it all! She knows nothing of it, remembers nothing!

KOZAKIEWICZ

Have you spoken to her?

GRÜNWALD

Of course.

KOZAKIEWICZ

Alone?

GRÜNWALD

What chance have I had? She doesn't seem to know me. She avoids looking at me. I impress her as much as the air. And if I show up . . . in two or three minutes, she's gone!

KOZAKIEWICZ

I admit, my dear boy, that your case is in a sense critical . . .

GRÜNWALD

[*Flaring up.*] No, no, no, no! I won't leave now! I'll be most everlastingly damned if I go!

KOZAKIEWICZ

'Tis better to curse than to snivel.

GRÜNWALD

I'll cling like a fortune-hunter; I'll stick as a sponge does to a rotten pile. I won't budge from this spot till not a drop of wine is left in the cellar and they're forced to load me on a cart and drag me off like a wooden image.

KOZAKIEWICZ

They'll hardly do that for the present.

GRÜNWALD

And oh, old boy, hasn't she grown to be a beauty! — And I can crumple that fellow up in a minute! I can smash every bone in his body!

[*He is trembling with excitement, scarcely master of himself.*

Kozakiewicz

You're to be congratulated on so enviable a capacity for passion. You weren't half so ardent in those days at Sylt.

Grünwald

[*Jumps up.*] Good-bye, Kozakiewicz! I'll start.

Kozakiewicz

Wha — at?

Grünwald

Am I to compete with that marionette? With that monster in the form of a college professor? With this sterile, mummified, smoked and dried simian of the tertiary period? The very thought of that drives me mad! Doesn't his trained poodledom revolt her? — Man, what devil put the thought into my head of creeping back, like a whipped cur, to this Europe that's in a state of dry rot, confusion and ruin. Couldn't I take nigger wenches into my house over there or cure sick Portuguese to death?

Kozakiewicz

Are you possessed by all possible demons?

Grünwald

Instead of that I pin my faith to the vows of a green girl!

Kozakiewicz

My dear boy, there were no vows. Not at least, to judge from what you told me at the time.

And now — come to your senses! Be yourself again. You've changed in a most appalling way. It's a good thing that there's no alienist around. Your affair is in a critical stage. But it isn't hopeless. To be sure, you'll gain nothing in your present state of mind. You'll have to turn yourself very nearly inside out.

GRÜNWALD

What haven't I already succeeded in making of myself?

KOZAKIEWICZ

A person not in the least amiable, but uncompanionable, angry, who gives his enemies an easy victory.

GRÜNWALD

Sorry. But I have no talent for hypocrisy.

KOZAKIEWICZ

It is a pity. For you must acquire it. You'll achieve your ends in no other way. You are not without confederates who are well disposed toward you in their hearts. I observed that in the little girl. In the older sister, too, to a certain extent . . . And the uncle can't conceal his feelings in the matter . . .

SABINE

[*Comes in hurriedly, opens the desk and searches for something in the pigeonholes.*] Don't let me disturb you, gentlemen. I've only mislaid something and seem unable to find it. The whole day has been spoiled!

KOZAKIEWICZ

And what is it, if one may ask?

SABINE

A little crucifix of ivory. A beautiful piece of old, romanic work. Papa bought it once at Aix-la-Chapelle and, with especial kindness, give it to me on my confirmation day. If it's lost, I'll be very wretched! No, it isn't here either! Good-bye! Aren't you going into the garden to play croquet?

[AGATHA *enters from the terrace.*

SABINE

[*To* AGATHA, *whom she has observed at once.*] Aunt Emily is waiting for you. By the way, I'm looking for my little confirmation cross. Did you happen to see it?

AGATHA

Lux had it last. I believe she wanted to show it to Otto.

SABINE

The little cross? To Otto? What for?

AGATHA

Perhaps it interests him. He tries his hand at sculpture, as you know.

SABINE

Well, I'll have to look up Otto at once.

KOZAKIEWICZ

[*Visibly with the intention of leaving* AGATHA *and* GRÜNWALD *alone together.*] My dear young lady, I'll join you. Your little brother-in-law is delightful and amusing at times.

[*Laughing, he and* SABINE *pass out upon the terrace.*

AGATHA

[*With a certain helplessness.*] Sabine, one moment . . .!

GRÜNWALD

[*Has risen respectfully upon* AGATHA'S *entrance. His face has become ruddy. He now walks up to her with intense determination. He meets a cold and repelling look. He answers the look with one of firmness, but bows his head in humility.*

AGATHA

What procures me this honour, doctor?

GRÜNWALD

I can't go on this way. I would hear my fate from your own lips — one way or another.

AGATHA

I don't understand you.

GRÜNWALD

I scarcely understand myself, Miss Agatha! But I would beg you to shorten the time of my torment by a word.

AGATHA

I neither torment you nor can I shorten the time of your suffering. I don't understand you.

GRÜNWALD

There was a time when you understood me well.

AGATHA

I don't know any longer what happened then.

GRÜNWALD

So it seems! But I might try to recall it to you.

AGATHA

No! For I have enough ado with my present problems.

GRÜNWALD

Then it seems that you are not satisfied with your present life and its problems.

AGATHA

Oh, but I am. Very much so. Why should you think I am not?

GRÜNWALD

I am sorry to have drawn that mistaken inference from what you said just now.

AGATHA

It was mistaken.

GRÜNWALD

So it seems.

AGATHA

I am sorry; but I shall have to leave you alone now. I . . .

GRÜNWALD

Oh, yes. You leave me very much alone.

AGATHA

For one there was yesterday; for another there is to-day. Each has his turn, doctor. That is the natural course of the world.

GRÜNWALD

It seems anything but natural to me.

AGATHA

[*Shrugging her shoulders.*] Yet we shall seek in vain to change it.

GRÜNWALD

Miss Agatha, before you go and with you the opportunity that may never present itself again, may I say something in excuse of myself?

AGATHA

You stand in need of no excuse.

GRÜNWALD

Perhaps not. And yet I should like to excuse myself.

AGATHA

Ah, doctor, such conversations only torment us and do not help us. Let us make an end of them here and now.

GRÜNWALD

You needn't hint that I shall make long speeches. I don't indulge in mere phrases. I . . . indeed your very presence . . . But I must talk it all out with you — just once.

AGATHA

Ah, one can live even without that. One sometimes imagines not, to be sure — when the solitary hours seem endless — when one consumes oneself, when bitter things happen: death and disappointment, and hoping and waiting month in and month out for that in which one had put one's trust! But, finally, one fights one's way through. It's possible.

GRÜNWALD

Your father said to me: What have you to offer my daughter?

AGATHA

I didn't say that to you. But leave aside what papa said. He is in his grave and so is all that. And you cannot awaken that which is dead.

GRÜNWALD

Your father hurt my pride.

AGATHA

Well, doctor, my pride was humiliated too. Consider what it means to wait one hour. My father died. That was a source of deep grief. And yet our time had come and our path was open, and one might almost have rejoiced in the midst of

one's grief! What happened? I stood there — despised and deluded and heard about me whispering and snickering.

GRÜNWALD

[*Blocks her way as she is about to escape.*] Agatha! One moment more! I couldn't come to you with empty hands.

AGATHA

Well, and what have you for me now?

GRÜNWALD

As little as I had then, to be sure, that is — nothing.

AGATHA

We both grasped empty air . . .

[*She hastens out and leaves him standing there.* GRÜNWALD *stares at the door through which she has disappeared.*

KOZAKIEWICZ

[*Re-enters carefully from the terrace.*] It isn't very tactful, my dear boy, but you'll set it down to my friendship if I ask you how matters stand.

GRÜNWALD

I ought to be sad. But something — what is it? — has brushed me with its wings.

KOZAKIEWICZ

Very well, my dear fellow, then be happy.

GRÜNWALD

I can't indulge in that either. It would be premature! At all events I was quite mad when I left this exquisite creature! A man who will let so precious a treasure slip from his grasp is simply unworthy of possessing it.

KOZAKIEWICZ

You have established some contact with her then.

GRÜNWALD

My dear man, I could stand on my head with delight! My ears have heard the sound of her voice! We have looked into each other's eyes! And in her eyes I saw defiance, reproach, bitterness, tears — but also something else which is not perhaps wholly dead.

KOZAKIEWICZ

A very happy German proverb says: "If you would seek fire, stir the ashes."

GRÜNWALD

But what now? What now? What now?

KOZAKIEWICZ

My dear fellow, I think you are in a fit state now to alter your aspect and behaviour.

GRÜNWALD

Really, I think you are quite right. It seems to me as though I must forthwith challenge to mor-

tal combat the whole profession of scholarship, the whole breed of cleries, the assembled college professors of the world. And cheerfully, I tell you, — full of zest! Haven't I some hobby?

KOZAKIEWICZ

You're an incorrigible idealist and capable of riding a different one every two hours.

[*On the terrace have appeared* NAST, SABINE, LUDOVICA, MR. RUSCHEWEY *and* OTTO. OTTO *and* SABINE *enter the room first.*

SABINE

And so you know where my little cross is?

OTTO

[*Very red and excited.*] I give you my word of honour that you'll get the little cross back if for three days you'll ask no one, but absolutely no one, where it is.

LUDOVICA

[*Stepping up to them.*] For heaven's sake, keep still, Sabine.

SABINE

What foolish tricks are you two up to again?

LUDOVICA

[*Puts her hands over* SABINE'S *mouth with passionate energy as* NAST *and the others are just entering the room.*]

NAST

It is absolutely necessary, I tell you, that the representation have a dignified and serious character.

LUDOVICA

On the contrary: it should be cheerful!

NAST

I shall not doubt myself even though the thoughtlessness of youth differ from me. For that very reason I have rejected my earlier plan involving the ass.

LUDOVICA

Do you expect us to snivel on the marriage eve?

NAST

No, we won't do that, my child. For no marriage eve celebration will take place.

LUDOVICA

Why not? We'll see about that, Mr. Nast. [*Softly to* OTTO.] He's so presumptuous only because aunt is here.

OTTO

[*Aloud.*] You girls are going to decide that alone, aren't you?

NAST

You are altogether mistaken, Otto. In questions of the finer morality it is the categorical imperative that decides.— To-morrow the councillor of the

synod will arrive. Among the remaining guests, too, there will be four or five whose tendencies are rigidly ecclesiastical. It is impossible to shock them wantonly. Sabine, surely you agree with me?

SABINE

On account of the way people talk — perhaps! Otherwise I'd have no scruple at all about making merry, quite according to papa's taste, on the marriage eve.

NAST

You would give frightful offence. For the evening would almost coincide with the anniversary of your father's death.

LUDOVICA

Uncle, what did papa say scarcely two hours before his death when he sent us to the vineyard?

RUSCHEWEY

I suppose he wanted grapes?

LUDOVICA

He wanted us to fire off the old pistol. What did he say to you over the champagne?

RUSCHEWEY

"I have lived a merry life and die a blessed death!" But don't bother me with those stories. Ask aunt Emily! My opinion no longer establishes a standard here! I've been thoroughly scolded.

Ludovica

Then dancing will be forbidden, too, I suppose.

Nast

Can any one here entertain a moment's doubt as to the answer to this question?

Grünwald

Certain peoples express mourning by wearing white garments and dancing.

Ludovica

Then, I suppose, you are in mourning, doctor?

Kozakiewicz

Oh, by how little deeper do the dead lie than we.

Nast

I do not understand what you mean to say.

Kozakiewicz

Oh, it has no meaning more definite than a presage.

Nast

At all events it doesn't change the fact that we must guard the dignity of this house at any cost.

Kozakiewicz

And you will do that, professor, by inditing a tragedy for the marriage eve celebration?

NAST

Has any one asserted that? To be sure, I have written something, something classical in spirit; but . . .

KOZAKIEWICZ

Sad, I suppose, you mean?

NAST

[*Irritated.*] Sad? Why? What do you mean? Serious! Not sad!

GRÜNWALD

Then the ladies need probably not yet abandon their hope of a cheerful day.

NAST

I can afford to overlook that remark for it is clear to me from what source it ultimately springs.

KOZAKIEWICZ

Bravo! It is only the envy of the poet. He himself often mounts Pegasus . . .

NAST

I would advise only skilled horsemen to do that.

KOZAKIEWICZ

Oh, we have three poets in our immediate circle. Old Dionysos is stirring in the vineyard.

NAST

Where is the third? I don't see him.

KOZAKIEWICZ

We could at once hold a tourney to prove whose seat is most unshakable.

NAST

Your honour, gentlemen, doesn't touch me. My father was director of a gymnasium; I grew up under the radiance of Homer. I can read my Horace asleep. In metrics and prosody my superior will not easily be found. And I need merely add that the late Professor Minckwitz was my teacher.

OTTO

A volume of old Minckwitz' poetry once fell into the river Pleisse, didn't it?

NAST

I beg your pardon?

OTTO

Thence arose the great mortality among the fishes at Leipzig.

NAST

Do not seek to fly, my son, until your wings have grown! You would be an admirable object for the academic prison.

[*All, except* NAST, *laugh heartily.*

GRÜNWALD

[*Apparently asking a serious question.*] Does it speak well for our system of education that

teachers and pupils, young people in general, live in a state of natural enmity?

KOZAKIEWICZ

Hardly, I should say.

NAST

Are you determined to stir up a controversy? It is indifferent to me; I am quite prepared.

SABINE

Lux, the situation is growing tense! We had better go!

GRÜNWALD

[*Straightforwardly, not rudely but rather with merry boldness.*] I really pity the Germans with their petrified so called higher system of education. The humanistic college is, even externally, a caricature of itself. Is it not strange that the queer, dry souled ants who creep about in these buildings assert that they are the guardians and defenders of the beautiful?

NAST

We are opposed to crotchets and to the phantastic, to be sure. If that is what you mean, you speak truly. Your other assertions are too monstrous to need refutation. The German school is a model! A model, I say, and that is a fact. Any one who ventured a contrary assertion would, simply in consequence of that folly, make himself an object of ridicule.

GRÜNWALD

I don't fear that at all. I fear the countless houses of correction, the dreary prisons which one calls institutions of higher education. They are a curse corroding our national pride, strength, beauty, cheerfulness, serenity — our whole character as a nation, in short. It is not true that the old Greek form of the gymnasium with its baths and pillars and columns and gardens is impossible among us. The school should be cheerful, bubbling over with happiness and life! It should re-echo the sacred song of stringed instruments, the happy dance and song.

NAST

Well, then, dance and sing, my good girls. It would be a charming aim and ending. In the palestra the youths went about naked. Are we to go naked too? These gentlemen here have strange opinions! And these opinions they emphasise in a mood of self-intoxication. They get drunk on sounding phrases in a manner characteristic of the very young university man. They're ecstatic liberators of the world and declaim at the top of their voices! — I have nothing to do with all that! These hysteric ardours wouldn't serve me! I take my stand quite simply on the solid ground of my profession, and it remains to be seen in the end which of us is offering a better service to the fatherland, the homeless, cosmopolitan adventurer, or he who, silently, earnestly and unremittingly performs his duty at home.

GRÜNWALD

If I should ever have the good fortune of being the father of a healthy, well-built son . . .

[*All except* NAST *burst out into hearty laughter.*

RUSCHEWEY

Now doctor, doctor, don't be too enthusiastic!

GRÜNWALD

I repeat. If I ever live to see that happy day, I would make every effort in my power to see to it that he has neither a crooked great toe, nor a crooked mouth, nor a squint, nor feels better and healthier in darkness than in daylight, nor injures his spine every time he draws himself up. I'll see to it that he cultivates such laughter that, at its sound, all the scarecrows at professorial desks are seized with a quaking of the knees and head over heels plunge back into the catacombs which are their place.

[*He goes out.*

[*Again all except* NAST *laugh heartily. At this moment enters* AUNT EMILY, *a small, insignificant, withered little woman in a bonnet and shawl. The laughter ceases immediately and a pause of embarrassment takes its place.*

AUNT EMILY

I hope I didn't disturb any one!

NAST

No, dear aunt. The interruption, if it be one, can be nothing but most welcome to nearly every one.

AUNT EMILY

Dear Ewald, pray don't excite yourself.

RUSCHEWEY

No, pray don't. People can differ and each man defend his opinion and yet one may be far from fighting about it.

AUNT EMILY

Fighting? Do you mean a duel? Dear Gustav, what is it?

[*In view of* AUNT EMILY's *pallid terror* LUDOVICA *and* OTTO *cannot contain themselves any longer and run out and across the terrace.*

NAST

No, dear aunt, you know my principles. Don't misunderstand uncle. Nor must you interpret my excitement falsely. Indeed I am thoroughly cool.

AUNT EMILY

Sabine, I can't help looking at you and wondering what your thoughts are.

SABINE

Ah, but I can't betray my thoughts.

KOZAKIEWICZ

[*Goes up to* AUNT EMILY, *bows deeply and goes out.*

SABINE

If you are leaving, dear aunt, I'll hurry and gather some grapes for you. Then I'll wait for you with the little basket at the gate.

AUNT EMILY

Don't bother further about me either, Gustav. Agatha will accompany me.

[SABINE *withdraws, and after her* RUSCHEWEY *with a phlegmatic shrug.*

NAST

Uncle has sunk into a really torpid condition. As far as I am concerned . . . it's my own fault. Who bade me concern myself with such disagreeable conflicts? The best families vied with each other for me! That most distinguished widow in Ulm . . . Wealthy ladies from the highest classes! To a man like myself all doors are open.

AUNT EMILY

Dear boy, calm yourself. Agatha is surely not so blind as to sacrifice a man of your distinction to the first adventurer who crosses her path.

NAST

You drove me into this, now help me! I won't stir a finger after this!

[*He hurries out into the garden.*

[Agatha *enters carrying a large straw hat by its ribands.*

Aunt Emily

Ah, there you are at last, my pet. Now we can go, I'm quite ready.— I had really yearned to see you all once more and chat with you. For who knows in how short a time you'll all be scattered to the four winds of heaven.

Agatha

Oh, aunt, I don't like to think of it. It would seem a homeless feeling to have to give up this piece of earth.

Aunt Emily

[*With insincere jocosity.*] And yet you confessed to me during your illness that you wanted to go to strange places!

Agatha

[*Picks to pieces a rose that she has taken from a tall stemglass.*]

Aunt Emily

How do you feel in the matter of your health?

Agatha

I am as healthy as it is possible to be.

Aunt Emily

And yet I'm not at all satisfied with your appearance yet.

AGATHA

One can't help one's looks, aunt Emily.

AUNT EMILY

Well, the period just before my marriage didn't agree with me either! And it's only eight weeks since you were in the clinic. Then you had just those two weeks in the Thuringian forest and since then you've had nothing but guests and excitement here. That was a bit too much.

AGATHA

Of course.

AUNT EMILY

Well, then, what do you think of this, my dear child? Of course my home is a simple one. But suppose I were to give you that idyllic room in the top story which you had during your illness? You told me how much you loved it! In that way you could avoid all the confusion here and live with me in my little home.

AGATHA

[*With frightened determination.*] Oh, no, dear aunt, I can't do that.

AUNT EMILY

As you please, but I'm really sorry. Why can't it be done?

AGATHA

For many reasons. And I assure you that everything that reminds me of my illness seems to suffocate me.

Aunt Emily

I could furnish the little downstairs room for you. It's only two steps from it into the garden.

Agatha

And then I wouldn't do it on Adelaide's account . . .

Aunt Emily

Dear child, I'm going to be quite frank with you. Ewald occupies a certain position. Circumstances have brought it about that his relations to this house are known in the city. Now Ewald lives among his colleagues. And, for the last two days, a couple of young men are living at the inn who sit up half the nights over their wine. The champagne is said fairly to flow. These same young men come daily to your house. There are whispers already. And so it might easily happen, quite unintentionally, of course, that Ewald is made ridiculous in his own circle and in the professional position which he has won by such arduous efforts. You will hardly, dear Agatha, care to repay his self-sacrifice in that way.

Agatha

Surely not. But I can't . . . I . . .

Aunt Emily

Let us leave any change of residence for you out of the question. To be sure, I don't understand your great delicacy. Which of your sisters paid any attention to you so long as you were ill? Think of the condition in which you were — the un-

reliability of this Grünwald which was the chief cause of your breakdown. Then think of Ewald's delicate and tasteful intervention — the flowers and books he brought you daily! Then think of your recovery and of your decision. All that should give you the strength, and especially the pride, not to waver any longer and to be quite firm in your behaviour and your withdrawal.

AGATHA

[*Softly.*] I am all that, dear aunt Emily.

AUNT EMILY

What does this man seek in your house? At bottom, of course, I have the firmest faith in you. Stay here! Very well. Don't go with me. Ewald hasn't the slightest notion that I wanted to talk to you. He would be bitterly angry with me if he knew.

[*Exit.*

[AGATHA *looks after her and nods good-bye with apparent friendliness. Then she turns and her lips begin to twitch. She fights her emotion. Then she steps in front of her mother's picture and looks up to it; she weeps softly and presses her crumpled handkerchief to her mouth. From the door to the left comes* LUDOVICA.

LUDOVICA

Agatha, are you alone here?

AGATHA

Yes, and that is best for me, too.

[Ludovica *observes* Agatha's *emotion and is moved by it in her turn and grasps her sister's hand.*

Ludovica

Unburden your heart to me, Agatha.

[Agatha *begins to cry softly:* Ludovica, *standing near the table, cries, too.*

Adelaide

[*Running in.*] Three cheers! My sweetheart will be here in a few minutes. [*She observes the condition of her sisters, is startled and strokes* Agatha's *hair.*] My dear, sweet girl, there's no need for you to suffer so!

[Agatha *sobs more violently,* Adelaide *begins to weep, too, sits down on the edge of* Agatha's *chair and presses her sister close to her.*

[Sabine *enters with a basket full of grapes.*

Sabine

Is aunt gone? Children, you've lost your minds, haven't you? Dear Agatha, do calm yourself. You've not really lost anything yet.

Agatha

[*Sobbing.*] Oh, it's nothing at all . . . don't bother . . .

Sabine

[*Weeping.*] The situation is entirely in your own hands. You . . .

[*She also embraces* Agatha *and they all sob together.*

Agatha

Do . . . do send those two strangers away!

Sabine

It will all come right of itself!

Mr. Ruschewey *enters carrying a bottle of Mosel wine under his arm and a glass and newspaper in his hand.*

Ruschewey

Thank God, the voice of the pedagogue is silent! Our evil conscience is without! I heard the door slam! [*He becomes aware of the weeping girls.*] Hullo? What kind of a mess is this? My dear children, there'll be a flood if this continues! Heavens and earth, the river will rise!

[*The girls are scattered to all directions so that* Ruschewey *remains alone in the room.*

CURTAIN

THE FOURTH ACT

The park of the "Bishop's Mount," on the slope above the vineyard. The background shows the valley of the Saale River with Naumburg visible in the distance. To the left, in the vineyard, there is an old ruined watch-tower. Its door has disappeared, and to the right, nearer the foreground, is an ancient cistern covered with boards. The foreground, in the direction of the vineyard, is bounded by a circle of ruined wall above which the poles of the vine emerge. To the left, slightly raised, and accessible by steps, is a tiny hermitage with a bell-tower of unhewn logs. In the centre a spacious greensward, surrounded by bushes and with an open view toward the horizon. The landscape shows brilliant Autumn hues. Now and then one hears the report of a pistol from the neighbouring vineyards, the cries of the vintners or the whetting of the sickles.

It is near noon of a clear Autumn day.

From the hermitage sounds the music of a violin. On its lower steps sit KOZAKIEWICZ *and* GRÜNWALD *with straw hats and canes and clad in light summer suits.*

KOZAKIEWICZ

Ceterum censeo! I think it's best, my boy.

GRÜNWALD

But it isn't easy to think of! It's hard! Confoundedly and damnably hard, Kozakiewicz!

KOZAKIEWICZ

Why? If things go well, it doesn't matter. If ill, it gives you a chance to accustom yourself to your fate.

GRÜNWALD

Accustom myself?

KOZAKIEWICZ

Precisely. You should be prepared for anything. I don't say it's easy. For she's blooming; she's beautiful! The sight of her is enough to intoxicate any man. But beware! For there is something in her too which, when the years have passed, may perhaps only confuse you more deeply and more bitterly.

GRÜNWALD

I tell you a duel is the solution — that's it.

KOZAKIEWICZ

No duel, I beg of you! It would violate my instinct of what is becoming to carry a challenge to this man. Then, too, I have a certain pity for him.— No, you had better withdraw and let me attempt to influence events for you in such a manner as shall not, I trust, be to your disadvantage.

GRÜNWALD

Friend, where shall I find air to breathe in if you send me forth from this garden?

KOZAKIEWICZ

I do not deny that I, too, find breathing up here curiously easy and life-giving. An anachronistic sweetness lies in the air! Something still and unspoiled and magical that is separated by the ancient and mossy stones of yonder wall from the shrill paroxysm of European civilisation.— I advise you to rest, to read — to kill the time in some way.

GRÜNWALD

Read? I have been staring at books and they seemed to be stones — stones wherewith I was to be stoned. But what did you say a moment ago?

KOZAKIEWICZ

About what?

GRÜNWALD

About the future.

KOZAKIEWICZ

I said that your future would bring its own troubles, even if you be victor in the situation today.

GRÜNWALD

Man, don't blaspheme this — divinity, I had almost said! Look at the freedom of that brow, the curve of that bosom! Consider her sincerity, the simple frankness of her glance. We will not have one hour that is dimmed. Any woman but this would make me the father of puny monsters.

KOZAKIEWICZ

I must think of my little angora kitten at home! I wonder what she is doing and who is taking care of her.

GRÜNWALD

Do you believe, when all's said and done, that there's a gleam of hope left for me?

KOZAKIEWICZ

No one could doubt that. The little girl gave me a hint! Perhaps her supposition is right. And who knows whether a betrothal between the lady of your heart and this donkey will really take place to-day? And, even so! A betrothal is not, after all, a wedding.

GRÜNWALD

There's nothing left but a duel — nothing! What time is it?

KOZAKIEWICZ

It's time for you to get into a better frame of mind. Blind eagerness is always hurtful. Even with youth on your side your outbreak yesterday profited you nothing. You only made your opponent more determined and demonstrated to him the seriousness of the situation. And even if all be lost — look at me! What does it matter, Grünwald? Have we not philosophised the nights away? That, too, is something. At least it makes one's retrospect of life a conciliatory one.— Listen how the pelican sings!

GRÜNWALD

Aren't you really in love, too?

KOZAKIEWICZ

For years I have been on leave of absence. It doesn't become me to speak of the active service of love.— But you will take my advice, won't you?

[*They have both arisen.* GRÜNWALD, *accompanied by his friend, starts along the path.*

GRÜNWALD

You will see her! [*He stands still for a moment.*] Don't forget me.

[*They disappear behind the tower.* KOZAKIEWICZ *reappears at once waving to his friend with his cane. Then he sits down on the steps of the hermitage again and listens. Soon thereafter* LUDOVICA, *holding her violin, appears in the door of the hermitage.*

LUDOVICA

[*Astonished.*] Doctor, you have been listening.

KOZAKIEWICZ

You have no right to be astonished at that, charming fairy! Whoever weaves over the gardens a magic web of such sparkle and radiance and glow must expect to catch the foolish fluttering moths.

LUDOVICA

I came up here because the noise in the house was getting unendurable.

KOZAKIEWICZ

And it's infinitely more beautiful up here, too.

LUDOVICA

But soon there will be noise enough here too. About one o'clock the whole company will be here. A picnic on the greensward has been planned.— But where is your friend?

KOZAKIEWICZ

Heaven only knows.

[*He assumes a melancholy expression and gives his shoulders a fatalistic shrug.*

LUDOVICA

Isn't it too bad about this horrid Ewald Nast? Not one of us really likes him! Even our grandmamma cannot endure him. And yet he tyrannises over us all.

KOZAKIEWICZ

I do not doubt your last statement. The first admits of one obvious exception.

LUDOVICA

Yes, and that's just what is so mysterious to all of us who love Agatha.

KOZAKIEWICZ

I have nothing against Mr. Nast, but the situation is an unnatural one. A glance suffices to grasp thoroughly the fundamental disharmony between the character of your sister and that of this excellent pedagogue.

LUDOVICA

Well, but why was your friend so stupid and kept Agatha fairly on the spit for so long?

KOZAKIEWICZ

My friend is a most kindly, most admirable fellow. But he is terribly straightforward and scrupulous. This tends to make him inflexible. And so he will sometimes act in the most impossible, unreasonable, foolish way and miss some aim that lies immediately in front of him.

LUDOVICA

[*Laughing.*] In that case they really suit each other very well.

[SABINE, *in a summer gown, appears on the lawn.*

SABINE

Ah, there are the little birds already waiting for the crumbs! Patience, our out-of-doors luncheon will soon take place.

LUDOVICA

We were talking about Agatha and Grünwald.

SABINE

Little silly! What is there to be said about that?

KOZAKIEWICZ

We will be silent so soon as you command. But no! We won't! We ought not to be silent — neither you, as her sister, nor I as his friend. And so I'm going to address a question to you fully conscious of the danger I run of losing your favour. I have been told by little Otto Kranz that, according to an old custom of this house, a distinguished

clergyman will hold a service here in the open today and will, on that occasion, announce a very horrible fact. Is that true?

SABINE

To whom is the fact supposed to be "horrible"?

KOZAKIEWICZ

Oh, my dear lady — to everybody!

SABINE

Are you the special pleader of any one in particular?

KOZAKIEWICZ

The fact is not only horrible. It is unnatural. For it will wound two noble natures in what is deepest in them.

SABINE

Doctor, we sisters have an agreement whereby none of us is to bar the other's way or influence the liberty of her decisions. To that agreement I must cling. Furthermore: Agatha always went her own way. Papa himself could scarcely influence her. I am not likely to succeed where he failed.

KOZAKIEWICZ

But if you share our opinion, ought we not to form a kind of league, a kind of rescuers' brotherhood?

[OTTO *emerges from the bushes,*

Otto

[*Dressed in a summer suit and wearing a straw hat.*] I wish you good folks would leave this place for a while.

Sabine

First I want to know where my cross is.

Otto

Oh, bosh! Cross! Cross! You people don't know how monstrously revengeful I am.— Come on, Lux! Now to the main performance! And you will do us the favour — won't you? — and leave?

Sabine

I only hope you won't get into trouble with your follies.

[Sabine *accompanied by* Kozakiewicz *climbs farther up the hill behind the chapel and disappears.*

Otto

Now hurry up, Lux. Help me drag the box up.

[Ludovica *hastens with him into the bushes and together they drag forth an oak chest that is black with age and covered with rusty iron bars of a Gothic design. Half way across the lawn they stop to rest.*

Otto

He'll be up in a few minutes. He's already parleying with the hunter of vermin down by the pool. You watch out! He'll have to pay!

Ludovica

Hurry, hurry, Otto, or he'll end by surprising us.

[*They drag the chest to the entrance of the tower where they set it down again.*

Otto

You say that he showed you the little cross?

Ludovica

Ewald asked me if it belonged to us and I answered at once that it did not.

[Otto *and* Ludovica *disappear with the chest within the tower. Immediately thereafter* Adelaide, *quite breathless, comes from below with her betrothed* Reinhold Kranz. *The latter is a tall, well-built man of twenty-eight with a mustache. He is rather formally attired in a frock coat with top-hat and cane.*

Reinhold

My dearest, my sweetest, you are utterly right! Come. [*He takes her into his arms; she nestles up to him; they kiss each other in self-forgetfulness. Suddenly they draw apart.*] Why, what is it?

Adelaide

Nothing, only it seemed to me as though some one were speaking.

Reinhold

Look here! Do you comprehend Agatha's taste?

ADELAIDE

You mean in regard to Ewald? Why, formerly, as far back as I can remember she used to poke fun at him. Well, they'll have to see how they fight their way through life together. [*Renewed embrace and kisses. Suddenly* ADELAIDE *withdraws herself and says:*] Did you hear that sound?

REINHOLD

No, where?

ADELAIDE

Somewhere down in the earth, quite audibly, a dull, echoing sound.

REINHOLD

But, dearest, you've grown quite pale. Do you people have ghosts up here?

ADELAIDE

It's quite uncanny in the garden at times. Especially about these old ruins here. The other day my three sisters and I walked along here, and suddenly we all stood still and began to tremble and looked at one another. And I assure you that we had all heard a voice quite near us which very clearly called for help twice over. "Help! Help!" Just like that.

REINHOLD

I suppose that was the rascally old bishop Benno who lived up here three hundred years ago with his nieces.

ADELAIDE

Now listen, there again! Don't joke about it.

REINHOLD

That was in the old cistern yonder. Now it's in the tower. There *are* ghosts here!

ADELAIDE

The tower and the cistern are connected by a subterranean walk.

[LUDOVICA *appears in the door of the tower.*

REINHOLD

Lux! So that's the heart of this mystery!

ADELAIDE

What in the world are you doing beneath the ground, Lux? You really frightened us.

LUDOVICA

I can't see you yet. I'm still quite blinded by the darkness. And the air down there — dreadful! And I fairly stumbled over skeletons.

OTTO

[*Invisible and in the cistern, crying:*] Lux!

ADELAIDE

Is there some one else down there?

REINHOLD

Yes.— Little brother, come up this minute! I'll teach you how to get into mischief here.

ADELAIDE

You were down there with Otto? What's the meaning of that?

LUDOVICA

It has no special meaning at all.

ADELAIDE

You come with me, Lux, this won't do. You're not in your right minds, children! — Come with me at once!

REINHOLD

[*At the opening of the vault, calls down.*] Otto, come up here at once! [*To* ADELAIDE.] You explain this matter thoroughly to your little sister; I'll take my brother in charge.

LUDOVICA

[*Still laughing is drawn away by* ADELAIDE.

[OTTO *appears at the entrance of the vault.*

OTTO

Heavens! I feel like an owl. I can't see a thing. Where is Lux?

REINHOLD

None of your business! People are coming up. Suppose you two had been caught here. It's a reflection on our family and aunt and Ewald don't like us as it is.

OTTO

[*Violently, as he peers about him.*] Sh! Hold your tongue one minute and come away!

REINHOLD

Your pertness passes all . . .

OTTO

Rot! Come on! Come on, I tell you! Don't spoil everything now!

REINHOLD

[*Pulled and nudged along by* OTTO.] You seem to have lost your senses entirely.

[*At the end of several seconds* THE VAGABOND *appears on the lawn and soon thereafter* NAST.

THE VAGABOND

[*Excited and a little drunk.*] We got to the place now, all right.

NAST

So this is the place. Well, it's quite as I thought: the tower, the cistern, the circle of the wall! And where did you find the little cross?

THE VAGABOND

Down there! Down there! Not up here!

NAST

Unfortunately I can't climb down there myself to-day. A frock coat and a top-hat are not adapted for such adventures. We wouldn't be undisturbed to-day anyhow. But since I'm an early riser, I'll come up here to-morrow morning before eight o'clock properly clad and then I won't object to being a mole among moles.

THE VAGABOND

Hol' on! Softly! You can see it from up here. [*In a very mysterious fashion he lifts the cover from the cistern, lies down on his belly and looks in.*] Do you see, something is glittering down in the cistern.

NAST

What's to be seen there, my good man?

THE VAGABOND

You c'n see it! You c'n see it glitter an' sparkle!

NAST

I must take off my coat for a minute and take a look for myself. [*He hangs up his coat on the branches, carefully puts down his hat and cane under the coat and kneels down at the edge of the cistern.*] I need a second pair of lenses for this. [*He slips a pair of glasses behind his spectacles.*] I don't see anything down there for the moment except some water.

THE VAGABOND

An' a bug that's floatin' on top.

NAST

Then you have better eyes than I have.

THE VAGABOND

And now he's found a dry spot. Look at the trail of him in the water! Now he's rollin' up! An' now he stands again! An' now he's rollin'

up again! An' now he's runnin' right up to the old box that looks outa the slime in one corner. You see! I'm pointin' my finger at it.

NAST

Unfortunately I haven't brought my opera-glasses. But wait a moment: point out the place again.

THE VAGABOND

It's a black box somethin' like a coffin! Only littler! With old iron bands all over it.

NAST

Where? There? It may be so in fact! You don't seem to be entirely in the wrong! But how can one get down there?

THE VAGABOND

We'll get a tall step-ladder.

NAST

[*Gets up and looks at his watch.*] How much more time have we? It's really a remarkable piece of business and excites me in a way. A chest, half buried in earth, very ancient apparently and locked! How did you discover it?

THE VAGABOND

Now I ain't goin' to tell you no lies but what I say you c'n bet your life on. The police over there in Naumburg was behind me. An' so I first jumped over this here old wall an' then I crept

into this here tower. An' there I found a passage under the earth an' followed it an' all at onct, I was in Naumburg again.

NAST

You mean to tell me that the subterranean passage leads as far as Naumburg.

THE VAGABOND

Right behind the old church in the town.

NAST

Let's leave that aside for the moment. You're exercising a mythopœic imagination. People assert, to be sure, that there is such a passage, but . . .

THE VAGABOND

I was scared an' I just crept on an' on an' there I saw the little cross. An' there was holes in the wall 's big as my fist, an' I looked through 'em an' there was the box.

NAST

[*With determination.*] Hurry! Run down to the gardener and get the tall ladder. We'd better get to the bottom of this business at once. A good half hour will pass before any one comes.

THE VAGABOND

That's right. Better go straight ahead!

[*He jumps over the low wall and runs off to get the ladder.*

NAST

[*Changing his mind again.*] No, no! Listen! It won't do now after all! There they are already on the slope.

[*Hastily he puts on his coat and hat, takes his cane and brushes himself.*

[*From below, in a cheerful but dignified procession, the following couples appear: The Reverend* MR. JOEL, *Councillor of the Consistory and* MRS. VON HEYDER, *the girls' grandmother. The latter is seventy years old. Her face is small, clever, crumpled, bird-like. She is dressed in black silk and has an air of old-fashioned distinction. The Councillor, of about the same age, is elegant, youthful for his years and presents with his well cared for silvery hair the type of a lover of the beautiful. These two are followed by* REINHOLD *and* ADELAIDE. *Next comes* AUNT EMILY *led by* AGATHA *and then* SABINE *with* DR. KOZAKIEWICZ. *Finally appear* RUSCHEWEY *with* LUDOVICA *followed by* OTTO. *They salute* NAST *with a solemn inclination of the head. The couples fall apart and the gentlemen fetch wicker chairs from the chapel. On the platform they place one for* JOEL, *lower they set two others for the old ladies. The company sits down unconstrainedly.*

JOEL

[*Remaining seated and in a gentle voice.*] I shall be brief, my dear ones in the Lord. I see

three generations before me. And with each of the three it has seemed wise to God to connect me in a deep and peculiar way. The gracious old lady here who has not shunned the difficulties of a long journey in order to be present with her granddaughter on this great day — she once brought her own daughter to my church when I was a young, untried clergyman, and her daughter was small and we administered the sacrament of baptism and gave her the name Orthalie. And Orthalie from a lovely and angelic child grew up to equally lovely womanhood and her honoured mother came to me and begged me to consecrate her union with an excellent man. And I did so. These old hands blessed Orthalie and rested upon her head and that of the man of her choice. But the way which the wisdom of the All-Merciful had destined unto her was brief. She died after having borne four beautiful daughters.

God took this flower of Paradise who, even in this earthly Paradise, could live only in a sweet sadness — God took her back into His radiance and glory and joy. Here have I often sat with your sainted mother. During the latter part of her life she seemed already a transfigured spirit. Nor is your father with us any longer. But the seed of these two blooms in loveliness, dear children. Yes, you are flourishing even in your orphaned estate. And, having blessed your parents in their consecrated graves, I am again in the service of happiness and of earthly bliss. The blessings of God are a thousandfold. But it is in two forms that these blessings manifest themselves today. I speak the names of Adelaide and Agatha.

[*Many glances are directed toward* Agatha

who has grown very pale. At this moment a tall ladder emerges, rung by rung, behind the wall. The company scarcely notices the fact and the Councillor continues.

JOEL

My dear ones, may the grace of the Heavenly Father dwell with you always. Look down, O glorified spirits of their father and mother, and bless these maidens and the men of their choice. Amen.

[THE VAGABOND *has now pushed the ladder entirely up. This disturbs* JOEL, *who brings his speech to a sudden end. In full sight now* THE VAGABOND *struggles to get the ladder over the wall.*

RUSCHEWEY

[*Indignantly approaching* THE VAGABOND.] You ass! Are you crazy? What are you doing here with that damned ladder?

AUNT EMILY

But Gustav, Gustav, moderate yourself! — Now you must kiss me, dear Agatha.

SABINE

[*Joining* JOEL *on the platform.*] We thank you a thousand times, dear Councillor.

JOEL

I am glad if you are satisfied, dear Sabine.

AUNT EMILY

[*To* EWALD.] My boy! With a contented heart and thanks to God I can now wish you, my excellent children, a long and blessed married life. Come, children, don't stand so far away from each other.

JOEL

[*Descends from the platform and presses the hands of the betrothed couple.*] I wish you happiness with all my heart.

MRS. VON HEYDER

[*Holding out her hand to be kissed by* LUDOVICA *and* OTTO.] Our dear Councillor is always the same. He makes all hearts melt.

AUNT EMILY

[*Presenting* NAST *to* MRS. VON HEYDER.] May he not shake hands with you too?

NAST

[*Kissing the old lady's hand.*] The honour is mine.

RUSCHEWEY

[*Angrily to* THE VAGABOND, *who refuses to be interfered with.*] I'll throw you down the slope! Get away from here! Be off!

MRS. VON HEYDER

[*To* AUNT EMILY.] What is the degree of our relationship?

NAST

May I venture to make that clear? My father was the Assistant Public School Principal Nast. My mother, whose maiden name was Finke, married after my father's death . . .

MRS. VON HEYDER

[*In her absent-mindedness has stopped listening.*] My dear ones, where is my partner? Don't forget an old woman, dear Councillor! Without you I feel almost afraid in this world full of youth! [JOEL *comes up at once and chivalrously offers her his arm.*] I miss . . . I don't know whom . . . I miss some one to-day. Where is . . . [*She gazes about through her lorgnon.*] Where is Dr. Kozakiewicz?

KOZAKIEWICZ

[*Steps forward at once and kisses her hand.*] With your kind permission — here I am!

MRS. VON HEYDER

Ah . . . yes . . . but where is that friend of yours? He told me such charming things about the fur traders' ship that goes from Hamburg straight to the Amazon, then up the river, and immediately returns laden with precious furs. Agatha, has your Mr. Grünwald left us?

KOZAKIEWICZ

I suspect that he has. So far as I know he exchanged telegrams with the Colonial Office at Berlin. He can find no rest on land.

RUSCHEWEY

[*Aloud to the* VAGABOND *who has let the ladder down into the cistern.*] What's the meaning of that, you scoundrel?

THE VAGABOND

I ain't no scoundrel! You ask that feller there! He give me my orders. You didn't give me none.

NAST

[*Quickly and condescendingly.*] Very well, Mr. Klemt, you may go down now.

THE VAGABOND

[*Insolently.*] Hell! I'm to go down, am I? What's all this here nonsense! I ain't got no time to be standin' here for nothin'!

RUSCHEWEY

Do tell me, Ewald, what is there between you and this rogue?

NAST

Oh, private matters! Nothing!

RUSCHEWEY

Oh, in that case I beg your pardon.

OTTO

It looks as if very deep excavations were going to be made here.

NAST

Who knows? Perhaps so, my pert young friend.

JOEL

Well, my dear Professor Nast, you have my very best wishes for your enterprise.

NAST

I am heartily obliged to you for your kindness.

JOEL

And you must make our Agatha happy.

NAST

I am no cooing lover. I have pretty well left behind me the years in which one writes voluminous love letters. I hope, nevertheless, to convince my Agatha that she is in good hands.

JOEL

The time of your liberty is now past, dearest Agatha. It is written: Wives, be subject unto your husbands . . .

NAST

Ah, my dear girl, don't be afraid. My pupils say of me that I am strict but just. I hope you will be able to bear out their opinion.

THE VAGABOND

[*Roars.*] Is somethin' goin' to be done here or not?

NAST

What is it, Klemt? Are you still here? I'll make the investigation to-morrow.

SABINE

But, Ewald, I'm surprised at you! You wanted to send the gardener away on account of this man and now you have intimate dealings with him.

NAST

I have my special reasons for it. Any one who like myself has turned his attention to local history for almost twenty years is not likely to reject the slightest opportunity of throwing some new light on the subject. It is far more important to do some active work for a past epoch than to indulge in mere phrases concerning the sculptures in our cathedral.— And why, after all shouldn't it be done now? Klemt, climb down into the cistern now. [THE VAGABOND *hastens to descend the ladder.*] And in the meantime I will show you something that chance placed in my possession recently.

LUDOVICA

Chance! There's no merit in that.

NAST

[*Laughing.*] I beg you to consider that we have suddenly become, as it were, a commission for scientific investigation. From my point of view, to be sure, it is not mere chance.

MRS. VON HEYDER

Ah, very interesting, indeed.

NAST

This may interest you even more vividly. [*He shows the old lady the little cross of ivory which* THE VAGABOND *had sold him.*] It is magnificent antique chiseling and probably dates from the epoch of Otto the Great — not to be confused [*he pats* OTTO'S *shoulder*] with Otto the small.

MRS. VON HEYDER

Exquisite!

AUNT EMILY

Wonderful.

KOZAKIEWICZ

A magnificent bit of workmanship.

JOEL

Almost as beautiful as the one [*he turns to* SABINE] which you wore on the day of your confirmation.

SABINE

Why, it's . . . it really looks like it!

NAST

[*Calls down into the cistern.*] Klemt! Klemt!

KLEMT'S VOICE

I got hold of it, professor!

Nast

[*Excited.*] I must say I am rather interested to know what it is. [*He runs to* Agatha *and gives her the little cross.*] The little cross is yours, my dearest child.

Agatha

[*As though awakening from a swoon.*] No, Ewald, that is Sabine's cross.

Nast

First comes my Agatha, then comes Sabine. [*He goes back to the cistern and takes off his coat.*] Permit me to take this liberty, ladies and gentlemen. This is a strangely interesting affair. For it is quite possible that we have found much more here than worthless stuff. When Gustavus Adolphus and the Elector Johann Georg defeated the terrible Tilly at Leipzig, many a prince of the Church undoubtedly hid his treasures and jewels in cellars and cisterns! — Mr. Klemt!

Klemt's Voice

I'm comin'!

Nast

Courage, Klemt!

Kozakiewicz

[*Softly to* Ruschewey.] Do you understand this business?

Ruschewey

No, frankly, not so far, at least. My head seems to be spinning like a top.

JOEL

What really is the matter in question, professor?

NAST

Something is lying down there in the cistern. I noticed it weeks ago. The other day I saw it again in company of my friend Ostermann. And now, for the sake of a jest, I wanted to confirm my impression. As I thought — he's bringing up something heavy.

MRS. VON HEYDER

Very exciting! Very charming, indeed! [*To* AGATHA.] Your betrothed has an extremely keen and clever mind.

NAST

You do me too much honour! Please, let us wait and see. So much only is certain already, the box is very old and covered with genuine Gothic iron bands. [*He bends far over the edge of the cistern.*] Otto, hold my hand! [OTTO *grasps his right hand so that* NAST *cannot slip into the cistern.* KOZAKIEWICZ *holds* OTTO *and* LUDOVICA KOZAKIEWICZ. NAST *stretches his disengaged hand down into the cistern.*] Now grasp it, Klemt! One! There we are! Two! Three! That's it! We have it!

OTTO

[*In extreme amusement.*] Ho, there! Get up!

NAST

Bravo! Excellent! At last! [*The box, which is the same that* LUDOVICA *and* OTTO *dragged*

across the lawn, is now brought out of the cistern and put down on the greensward.] What did I tell you?

The Vagabond

I wouldn't do that twice over for you! I want my money now! Then I gotta go!

Nast

I shall be generous! Here are three shillings, my man. And now let us look at this thing. Aha! First of all — a lock! It is open. Probably rusted in the course of time.

The Vagabond

[*To* Otto.] Well, didn't I do that promptly, all right?

Otto

Hold your tongue and get out of this!

[*The* Vagabond *jumps over the wall and disappears.*

Nast

This then will present no difficulty. It may be that the contents are of no significance. Or else are ruined from age. On the other hand, it is possible . . . [*He lifts the cover of the chest, kneeling before it, with trembling fingers and stares into it. All crowd about him in extreme curiosity.*] Why, what is this?

Aunt Emily

Well, what is it, Ewald?

NAST

[*As though stunned.*] There are . . . there are strange things in here.

JOEL

It looks very appetising, indeed.

SABINE

[*Lifts out of the box a large sausage done up in tissue paper.*] Isn't this cervelat sausage from Gotha?

RUSCHEWEY

And here is a *paté de foie gras* from Naumburg!

LUDOVICA

And this is freshly boiled ham from Prague.

MRS. VON HEYDER

Do you see, dear Councillor? That is a charming jest, dear children, and it has succeeded charmingly! Oh, how amused your father would have been.

[SABINE, LUDOVICA, RUSCHEWEY, KRANZ *and* ADELAIDE *burst out into loud laughter.* JOEL *can scarcely preserve his gravity.*]

AUNT EMILY

[*Pale with excessive indignation.*] I consider this actually vulgar!

NAST

[*Rises. Amid a deathlike silence he puts on his coat again and offers his arm to* AUNT EMILY.]

Ah, I am to be made a butt of here! My excellent aunt Emily, come. We are not suited to such an atmosphere.

SABINE

[*Half laughing and half seriously trying to placate him.*] Ewald, one must know how to take a joke.

NAST

Sorry!

AGATHA

Please, Ewald, take me with you!

NAST

I wouldn't want to spoil your picnic!

[*Without looking around* NAST *and* AUNT EMILY *take their departure.* AGATHA *goes forward a few paces and calls out:* "Ewald!" *She receives no answer. Thereupon she hurries away into the park in the opposite direction.* SABINE, KRANZ *and* RUSCHEWEY *simultaneously rush up to* OTTO *and try to catch him by the ears.*

SABINE

Confess, Otto! You managed this!

OTTO

I did, most assuredly! You remember the donkey in the pantomime? Tit for tat!

CURTAIN

THE FIFTH ACT

The scene is the same as in the preceding act. The chest with the food stands deserted and untouched. The sun is approaching the horizon. It is toward five o'clock in the afternoon. SABINE, LUDOVICA *and* ADELAIDE *approach from different directions.*

SABINE

You didn't find her either? Nor I!

ADELAIDE

Perhaps she's been down in the house this long while.

LUDOVICA

I've just come from there. Uncle Gustav is reconnoitering about the house constantly. I can assure you that she isn't there either.

ADELAIDE

Perhaps she ran over to Naumburg to aunt Emily's in order to placate her and Ewald.

LUDOVICA

I'll stake my life on her not having done that. When Ewald turned to her at the last and gave that cold answer — I was looking at her. No, she wouldn't do that.

SABINE

Ah, but Agatha is not to be trusted with herself. If only she doesn't do something else that is even more foolish.

ADELAIDE

Let's go up through the hollow passage together once more and look through the little gate up above.

SABINE

Do you know that Grandmamma is surpassing herself in generosity to-day and has hired the city band of Naumburg for an evening serenade here in celebration of the day?

ADELAIDE

How strangely things turn out at times — so differently despite the pleasantest prospects!

LUDOVICA

Why, the door of the chapel is locked.

SABINE

What?

LUDOVICA

Perhaps Agatha is sitting in there. I'll slip up there softly, softly. [*She goes gently up to the door of the chapel and listens. Then she comes down the steps and whispers.*] Some one must be in there. I hear the rustling of a silk dress.

SABINE

In that case, my dears, we'll proceed energetically. [*She strides up the steps, knocks at the door*

and calls:] Agatha! Agatha! Will you please open the door?

ADELAIDE

Why do you suddenly think that she is in there?

SABINE

The door is never locked. Agatha! Agatha! Do open the door! You ought not to frighten us uselessly.

ADELAIDE

I don't believe that she's in there, Sabine.

LUDOVICA

I just peeped through a knot-hole. She's sitting in there. In the corner to the left. Squeezed right up against the wall.

SABINE

[*Aloud, with feigned determination.*] Lux, Lux, go for uncle! Tell him he'd better bring the gardener right along with him. The door must be forced. [*There is a knocking at the door from within.* Is any one in there?

AGATHA'S VOICE

It's I!

SABINE

Oh, it's you!

AGATHA'S VOICE

Please do me the kindness and leave me alone!

SABINE

Yes, surely! But won't you unlock the door first?

AGATHA'S VOICE

Not now, Sabine! Oh, not now!

SABINE

But I demand that you do it now!

AGATHA'S VOICE

Are you all three there?

SABINE

Lux, Adelaide and myself.

AGATHA'S VOICE

Tell Lux and Adelaide to go away!

LUDOVICA

Oh, Agatha, you are nasty to me! And I love and admire you so much!

ADELAIDE

[*Draws* LUDOVICA *away.*] Come on! Your admiration can't help her much just now.

[ADELAIDE *and* LUDOVICA *withdraw.*

SABINE

[*Beckoning her sisters to hasten out of sight.*] Agatha, open the door! We're alone now!

AGATHA'S VOICE

Do you swear that that is true?

SABINE

Yes! Do you hear? I swear it! [*The key is slowly turned in the lock and* AGATHA, *pale and showing signs of weeping, appears in the door.*] But, my dear girl, you're actually limp.

AGATHA

What is it? What do you want?

SABINE

Really nothing. I simply wanted to find out where you are and whether you're in a rational state of mind.

AGATHA

[*Tearfully.*] I really don't understand . . . You people with your "rational state of mind"! I wish you wouldn't concern yourselves with me. I'll have to find my own way alone.

SABINE

The only question is: what is that way?

AGATHA

Let me be! Let me be! I beg of you! Do, dear Sabine, let me take care of myself. I don't wish to be a burden to any one. And it's nothing to anybody what way I choose for myself — even if it's to follow mamma who was saved from life early too.

SABINE

You can think all that out to-morrow! Come, to-morrow is another day. And the sun will shine anew . . .

AGATHA

Yes, and there will be new pressure and new embarrassment and new agony.— I don't understand how the rest of you seem to cling to all that! What do you expect? What do you hope for? The mill grinds the same way day after day; the carpenter saws, the baker bakes! It's all so empty, so unspeakably monotonous! And endless torment — isn't that a senseless thing?

SABINE

You torment yourself, dear Agatha.

AGATHA

I won't be present at Adelaide's wedding.

SABINE

Will you go and stay with aunt Emily the while?

AGATHA

Never in the world would I go to aunt Emily.

SABINE

Well, where will you go?

AGATHA

Don't ask me! — [*with sudden passion.*] I am glad that things have turned out as they have!

I am glad that people have shown me their true faces — without masks, as they really are. It is quite as I would have it. I know them now. I hate them all! I hate them both!

SABINE

Dear Agatha, you yourself desired it! You mustn't be surprised now!

AGATHA

I've told you that I'm not at all surprised. The one lies and the other lies! And neither one really needs me. They can both get along without me.

SABINE

Yes, there are innumerable possibilities in this world.

AGATHA

And loyalty and love are not necessary to it. You don't know how I've brooded and analysed myself, how I've had my conscience on the rack! Now I thought one way, now another, in constant fear of doing something wrong! And now I stand here utterly deserted. I beseech you to tell no one, not even our sisters, a word of what I've just spoken! I don't recognise myself to-day! I have lost my real self for the time and must seek it and for that purpose I must be alone.

SABINE

Agatha, I'm worried about you.

AGATHA

There is no need, Sabine. For really, as things have turned out, I may the more easily fight my way through to some kind of clearness and to entire independence.

SABINE

That would be well. Then you would have arrived at my standpoint. But now come with me, please . . .

AGATHA

And I beg you to leave me alone, Sabine. I swear to you . . .

SABINE

[*Taking her hand.*] You do give me your word then?

AGATHA

Yes, to fight my way through and not to yield to any foolish impulse.

[*The sisters kiss each other to seal the promise and leave the scene together. After they have disappeared* GRÜNWALD *is seen descending to the lawn. He stays close by the wall and looks around through fieldglasses. As he is looking around and crouching so as not to be seen, it is clear that he is most anxious to understand the incidents that have taken place in and about the house. Unsuspectingly, her kerchief pressed to her lips,* AGATHA *returns.* GRÜNWALD *hears her step at once, is startled, and turns around. They recognise each other and stand still as though rooted to the earth.*

GRÜNWALD

I dare scarcely trust my eyes.

AGATHA

[*In convulsive helplessness.*] Go! Go! Leave me!

GRÜNWALD

No! At this moment I must not! I see from your looks, Miss Agatha, that you ought not to be left alone now.

AGATHA

On the contrary! Go! Leave me!

GRÜNWALD

Don't ask that of me, dearest Agatha! Leaving everything else out of the question . . . A strange chance seems to make it possible . . . It is my duty at this moment to stay! And my action is not either evil or irresponsible.

AGATHA

Won't you please go and leave me?

GRÜNWALD

I beg of you at least to listen to me! I demand nothing, I expect nothing! I have tried to resign myself! And I'm willing to free you at once from my troublesome presence. But first call your sisters.

AGATHA

No, no, for heaven's sake! Not that!

GRÜNWALD

Well then, dear Agatha, you will have to bear with me until you are safe again in the care of your sisters who love you.

AGATHA

There is no one on earth that loves me.

GRÜNWALD

And heaven, unfortunately, remains closed to us. We fall back upon the earthly and the finite so long as we live and breathe.— Good God, I feel myself as though mountain and valley were swaying about me. It is really a temerity to try to comfort another in such a state of mind.

AGATHA

Oh, into what a frightful condition have you brought me!

GRÜNWALD

[*Kneels down before her and takes her hands.*] I have done so and I curse myself for it! And I am accursed for it! I deserve nothing of you, my dearest, except contempt and punishment. But I can't live without you. I'm driven about. I can neither truly live nor die! You can save me.

AGATHA

[*Horrified and deeply shaken.*] No, no, Mr. Grünwald. Get up!

GRÜNWALD

Help me then to arise. I cannot alone. [*He half lifts himself up and half draws her down and*

with a cry of jubilation kisses her on the lips.] Agatha!

AGATHA

[*Beneath his kisses.*] It has been so long . . . so long . . .

GRÜNWALD

At last! At last! And I have so longed for you! My soul has wandered about this house so often. . . . It was a sick soul, a broken soul, for your power is great. Ah, if you could have seen and known! A sea-mew followed the ship. It seemed to me that it was your faithful soul. The image wandered with me over sea and land. I have prayed to that little picture of you. I have made an idol of it. I have worn your glove next to my heart. And I could not bear to see any other woman. I hated all others. For they seemed with their jeering faces to make my loss seem a thousand times more painful. Ah, did you ever feel anything of all that?

AGATHA

I have felt it.

GRÜNWALD

It seemed to me that I was as nothing without you. And I esteemed this a weakness in me and tried to combat it. I was ashamed and full of self-contempt. Many a time in my heart I tried to bury you — lovely in your death, in white garments! I buried you with flowers and with tears. And suddenly you would arise again, triumphant as a queen, and look upon me and I could think of nothing but of possessing you! I could not think

of my work nor of my explorations. I was a coward and horribly afraid of death. For I knew that I would find no rest without you . . . without you . . . not in the grave . . . not in the uttermost depth of the sea.

AGATHA

And I hated you so! I hated you so!
[*They kiss again.*

GRÜNWALD

[*As though awakening.*] Is it possible that all this is true? Is it really you whom I am holding in my arm with neither walls nor oceans between us? And you suffer it to be? After I seemed to myself cast out forever from my Paradise, do I really hold you in my arms? Oh, dearest! It is to me almost a burden of joy. I hate to see men shed tears. But this unmans me.

AGATHA

I don't know how it has come about. But if you like me, wicked as I am, and ugly and repellent . . .

GRÜNWALD

This tender little hand! What a tyrannical grasp it has. It can slay and awaken to life again. And your hair! And the golden down of your neck! And the dear, wild, defiant heart beating in that lovely bosom that is now pressed at last against mine — and beats in harmony with mine! There is a dread in such exquisite fullness of possession! [*They lose themselves in their passion.*

AGATHA

I hear steps, dearest friend. You must arise!

GRÜNWALD

I have tasted of life now! I have lived! Nothing can harm me any more. Who goes there? No one? Better both for him and us. For I'm in a fierce mood. My compliments to Providence. This, at least, was decently managed for once!

AGATHA

[*Pins up her locks, smoothes her frock and approaches* GRÜNWALD *with shy tenderness. She takes his hand and caresses his shoulder lightly.*] If you don't mind, dear Frank, let us go right down to Grandmamma and make the announcement to everybody.

GRÜNWALD

Are you in such haste, dear heart?

AGATHA

Yes, they are to know it at once now — all of them. Oh, I'm tired of secrets and of turbid affairs. And you shall learn to know me in a different guise.

GRÜNWALD

Remain as you are, dearest. Let them bore one another down there. The sun is sinking. The moon is rising. I won't give you up now, my love. Shall we travel far away at once?

AGATHA

Wherever you command me to go. This moment if you desire.

GRÜNWALD

Without saying farewell to your uncle and your sisters.

AGATHA

You are all in all to me. What do I leave behind me? I live only in your sight.

GRÜNWALD

You are suddenly so strong, so determined?

AGATHA

I am neither strong nor determined. I have you . . . you!

GRÜNWALD

[*Kisses her again and again, and draws her toward the chapel.*] How fragrant the thyme is!

AGATHA

The thyme and the heather.

GRÜNWALD

Oh, precious, sweet, intoxicating savour! Behold the moon is like a ewer of incense! Exquisitely bewildering fumes rise from it. Look how the river flows below. The floating mists are like sacrificial incense. And the ghostly old city with its cathedral. You mermaiden! You moonsprite! All

about us is like an adoration of you! And I have fallen your victim in life and death!

[*They disappear in the chapel.*

[*Silently* Otto *and* Ludovica, *swinging lit paper lanterns, leap upon the lawn.*

Ludovica

Grandmamma's serenade will begin below at once.

Otto

Where will the musicians be?

Ludovica

Below, in front of the terrace, of course. Grandmamma and the Councillor are sitting on the terrace and playing tarock.

Otto

What kind of a programme are they going to play?

Ludovica

Dances and other music that is not heavy. Grandmamma, as you know, likes that. The world up here seems desolate and sad to her. She wants to imagine that she's at Nice or Baden-Baden.

[*An orchestra below is heard softly beginning to play a light but by no means trivial waltz melody.*

Otto

Lux, that box is still standing here.

LUDOVICA

What a blessing that box was. If only Agatha had the good sense to recognise its beneficence.

OTTO

[*Dancing, and swinging the paper lantern in one hand, an apple in the other.*] Yes, the box is a very beneficent one — partly through the purpose it served, partly through its contents.

LUDOVICA

Ah, the beautiful, splendid, golden rennets! [*She dances with* OTTO *but at some distance from him, also holding her paper lantern in one hand and an apple in the other.*] We don't care about anything. We'll be merry! . . . Look, I'm a bat!

OTTO

Hoo-hoo! And I'm an owl.

LUDOVICA

I'm a witch!

OTTO

And I'm a wizard.

[*Some one calls softly:* "Bravo," *and claps his hands. The dancers stop their grotesque figures.* KOZAKIEWICZ *enters the circle of light.*

KOZAKIEWICZ

I'm interrupting the magic dance of the night. Ah, lovely glow-worms, show me favour and as a

silent, speechless guest receive me into your magic circle.

LUDOVICA

You didn't go home at all, doctor?

KOZAKIEWICZ

I went, but I didn't find the fugitive.

LUDOVICA

Don't speak in such a minor key, doctor. It goes right through one!

KOZAKIEWICZ

Did I do that? I wasn't conscious of it. Well, our period of grace is nearing its end and the compass points once again toward the bare, rude, banal, trivial and nowise ideal world.

LUDOVICA

One should dance when one is melancholy.

KOZAKIEWICZ

Yes, the necessary dance of death. Mankind is far from having fathomed its own great unimportance. The lives of most people is a mere smouldering — no clear flame. There are those who want to quicken the smouldering into flame. There was Humboldt who slept but five hours on an average. Children have the dionysiac impulse; adults have usually lost it.

LUDOVICA

Doctor, you are still continuing in the same tone. And you were always so merry until now. What

do we care for the folly of others? Let us be glad that we are so sensible. You are not Mr. Grünwald; you can still laugh.

KOZAKIEWICZ

Why not? "Who's hurting you?" said the cook to the eel as she skinned it. Wisdom does not protect one from folly! The moonshine excites me. Forgive me and let me chatter my confused speeches to the moon.

LUDOVICA

Do you know what I dreamed? That we were drawn in three sleighs — Grünwald, Agatha and I. Grünwald's sleigh was drawn by a white dog, Agatha's by a white she-bear, mine by a beautiful white mare by whose tail I had to hold fast . . .

KOZAKIEWICZ

And where was I?

LUDOVICA

I don't know.

KOZAKIEWICZ

And whither did you travel without me?

LUDOVICA

Otto ran ahead and lured the beasts on.

KOZAKIEWICZ

[*To* OTTO *who is balancing himself with his lantern on the wall.*] Dance young man, leap!

Evening shows a different wisdom from morning. *Si sa come si incommincia e non come si finisce.* Light our way and lure us on and lead us to some island of the blest!

LUDOVICA

Are you really going to travel, doctor?

KOZAKIEWICZ

Assuredly.

LUDOVICA

Whither?

KOZAKIEWICZ

To the moon.

LUDOVICA

That wouldn't be so far from here! I'd like to have a ticket for that trip myself.

KOZAKIEWICZ

All right! Come with me to the moon!

LUDOVICA

After all I won't. She's only a burned out cinder anyhow.

KOZAKIEWICZ

You have only to play your violin and the green will spring forth round about you.

LUDOVICA

Ah, you want to take a round-trip with me?

KOZAKIEWICZ

From everlasting to everlasting, yes!

OTTO

And what will become of your library in the meantime? You expected to unearth so many treasures.

KOZAKIEWICZ

Well, I won't unearth them. That's all! My fate will be the same as that of the poor devil here an hour ago who thought to unearth a treasure from the well. The treasure vanished and he himself was jeered at in addition. Listen how beautifully the crickets chirp!

OTTO

The treasure of the schoolmaster did not vanish. He only didn't know how to gain it. Here are two — three — four — five bottles of champagne. [*He takes them out one by one.*] And here's a cup! And even a corkscrew! [*The popping of the corks is heard.*] Had that monster of a treasure seeker grasped the wealth within his reach instead of going away wounded he would be a great man now.

[*All three hold filled cups in their hands.*

LUDOVICA

Let us drink the health of your poor friend.

KOZAKIEWICZ

And let us also think of *his* poor friend who — since life at any point is but a moment — is very

happy just now. The future? The beginning entails the end. We cannot escape consequences. [*They clink their glasses.*] Let us be happy between the beginning and — the end! — The differentiation of the two sexes, even though it embitters life at times, has, in reality, created all the heaven that man knows. Everything that stirs and glorifies the heights and depths of earth has sprung from this division. It is this that keeps the miner in his shaft, the aeronaut on his plane; it is this little cæsura in the universe which causes an infinite, inexhaustible wealth of delights to be showered upon mankind.

OTTO

I'm going to make a speech sometime — later. I'm going to speak my mind freely and tell how everything must be, and expose the fundamental truth to everybody.

KOZAKIEWICZ

Why don't you make your speech at once?

OTTO

[*Feeling the effects of the wine and continuing to drink at intervals.*] I'll tell you this much: a mountain ought to be a mountain, a tree, a tree; a camel, a camel, and a man — a man!

KOZAKIEWICZ

Have pity on us! But at the end you said something that has a deep, a very deep meaning! Man! How far are we from being that truly!

[SABINE *comes also with a paper lantern.*

Sabine

Is this a carousal?

Ludovica

We are warring against the poison of the blues that drops from the moon.

Sabine

And down there whence I have fled reigns boredom — frightful!

Otto

[*Beside the open chest.*] We mustn't let that perish which arrogance and haughtiness disdained.

Sabine

You look like cockchafers. No, I meant to say glow-worms.

Otto

I feel much more like a cockchafer. I'd like to devour all the celery here.

Kozakiewicz

[*Touching his glass to* Sabine's.] Oh, if only love had not these thousand impassable barriers. But the wine of the grape makes these barriers break down.

[Adelaide *and* Reinhold *appear.*

Adelaide

Is Agatha here?

SABINE

I believe Agatha has gone to bed. At least I heard her say through the door to the maid that she wanted her bed opened at once.

ADELAIDE

She will feel best there, surely.

OTTO

Oh, Ewald, what did you know of the contents of this box? Salmon, lobster, fresh bear's ham, partridge, baked humming-bird!

LUDOVICA

[*Dancing and humming.*

"Little bird called Kolibri
Lead us on to Bimini . . .

KOZAKIEWICZ

[*With a graceful gesture toward* LUDOVICA, *continuing the quotation:*
"Fly ahead of us; we'll follow
In our gayest caravels."

REINHOLD

I propose to take advantage of this faery atmosphere. Here, in the open air, let us dance to the charming music of your national dance, doctor — a Polish dance! Will you join us? The excellent betrothed couple will precede.

Otto

[*Who is the last to join the procession with* Sabine.] For even the happiest human being needs some refreshment.

[*At this moment the bell of the little chapel strikes softly and repeatedly. They all stand surprised.*

Adelaide

I'm going to run away. There is a ghost here.

Ludovica

So the vintner was right when he said that the little bell sometimes tolls at midnight.

Reinhold

What ghost would you suspect here, my dears?

Otto

Perhaps our cousin Ewald Nast.

Ludovica

Do run on and ask uncle to come up.

Reinhold

Perhaps it is that poisoner of mice and rats.

[*Somewhat fearfully they approach the dark entrance of the chapel.*

Kozakiewicz

[*Smiling calmly, takes a cigarette from his cigarette case and lights it.*] Oh, a fortune for a ghost!

LUDOVICA

[*Behind* REINHOLD *to whom she is holding fast.*] Come back! Come back! Some one is fluttering out.

ADELAIDE

[*Suddenly, after they have all gathered again.*] A bat is in my hair!

OTTO

And now some one is standing in front of the door.

SABINE

Two of them!

REINHOLD

Good people, don't be ridiculous.

OTTO

I'll light up the spook thoroughly.

[*Bravely he ascends the platform where* GRÜNWALD *and* AGATHA *stand almost unrecognisable in the darkness.* OTTO *lights up their faces. Dumb with astonishment the whole company gazes at the lovers.*

KOZAKIEWICZ

[*Breaking the silence.*] My boy, you have better luck than sense.

GRÜNWALD

To be sure, if I hadn't had you!

[*They all break out into the laughter of relief and surround the couple. The girls*

embrace Agatha *in their enthusiasm and delighted surprise.* Grünwald *and* Reinhold *fall into each other's arms in the confusion.*

Grünwald

Whom did I get hold of?

Reinhold

Reinhold Kranz.

Grünwald

Happy to meet you. Grünwald is my name. [*To* Kozakiewicz.] She rang the bell, my boy.

Kozakiewicz

[*Pressing* Grünwald's *hand.*] It was well, dear comrade, and a little sad, too. Do you remember when together we admired the tall sculptured figures in the cathedral which have, in a certain sense, come to life here? You said the figures and the cathedral itself had once been aglow with colour like a humming-bird. And now everything was faded and dun as a life without love. Well? Now everything has grown gay at once!

Ludovica

What shall we do? Give me your arm, doctor! We'll continue the Polish dance.

Kozakiewicz

With what infinite pleasure!

[*The couples walk circlewise.*

LUDOVICA

What eyes grandmamma will make when she sees us coming.

SABINE

Soon everything will have vanished. The foliage is almost gone from the trees now, and then our mountain will be left quite desolate.

LUDOVICA

The dream of life is its best part, Sabine!

KOZAKIEWICZ

Then let us dance on and on — into the blue, the dark, the distant, into the uncertainty of heaven and of the seas.

[*To the sound of soft music they proceed by couples and sing the while the verses of Heine:*

"Little bird called Kolibri
Lead us on to Bimini,
Fly ahead of us; we'll follow
In our gayest caravels.

"On the island Bimini
Dwells eternal spring-tide's rapture,
And the golden larks ascending
Jubilant sing in the azure."

CURTAIN

GRISELDA

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

Father Helmbrecht.
Mother Helmbrecht.
Griselda, *their daughter.*
Margrave Ulrich.
Count Eberhard.
Countess Eberhard.
Count Heinz.
The Baroness.
The First Baron.
The Second Baron.
The Third Baron.
The Chaplain of the Castle.
The Major-Domo.
The Warder.
The Physician.
First Lady.
Second Lady.
First Tiring Woman.
Second Tiring Woman.
The Nurse.

THE FIRST SCENE

The farm-yard of HELMBRECHT. *To the left the house, divided into stable and dwelling, each with its door. The dwelling-room has two small windows. Opposite it a stall with woodshed. The small farmyard is separated from the road in the background by a palisade fence. Near the fence, the little gate in which is open, a wood pile. Over it curves a beautiful apple tree, heavy with red, ripe apples. The background reveals mountain meadows, forests, and a chain of hills streaked with snow. Not far from the door of the house a spring pours its plashing water into a stone trough. A plough stands in the middle of the yard.*

FATHER HELMBRECHT, *more than fifty years old, sits on the ground and sharpens a scythe. He is a sinewy, extremely thin little man of a sunny-tempered, friendly sort. The hair of his head is white as well as his beard which stretches, frame-like, from ear to ear under his chin and leaves his face clean.*

MOTHER HELMBRECHT *sits on the threshold of the house and lets her spinning-wheel whir. She is about forty-five, but care, work and illness have aged her prematurely.*

GRISELDA, *the daughter of these two, is a peasant-maid, twenty years old, of extraordinary beauty and ample stature. A Valkyrie-like figure. Her feet are bare, her skirt short, her bodice manicoloured. She pushes a barrow full of gleanings to the stable door and empties it there.*

It is a sunny morning in Autumn.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Heigho! A man gets old. Ten years ago I was younger than I am to-day, mother.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

The weaker the beggar, the stronger the crutch.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Begging and working are two different things after all!

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Griselda, hurry! You still have four dozen eggs to carry out beyond the village.

GRISELDA

[*Harshly.*] I do all I can, mother.

[*She lifts a load of clover and carries it into the stable.*

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Think of all one's bit of field is to supply! The rent is greater than the harvest.

[GRISELDA *returns.*

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Griselda!

GRISELDA

Well, what now?

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

If I could do without help, I wouldn't need to call you, lass! What has come over you? It was not your wont to be so ugly to your mother.

GRISELDA

One has cause enough to be ugly in this world.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Why?

GRISELDA

Why? Because! That's a question many a one has asked.

[*She carries another load of clover into the stable.*

FATHER HELMBRECHT

[*Walks, with the scythe in his hand, up to the stable-door and talks into it to* GRISELDA.] Well, so that's done. I've sharpened the scythe for you. To-morrow morning early, right early, lass, we'll cut the last aftermath down in the hollow.

[GRISELDA *returns.*

GRISELDA

To-morrow is Sunday.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

The aftermath must be brought in, even if it be Sunday.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Well, well, lass, What's all this? You were not wont to be so set on going to church. Did the new chaplain turn your head?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

It may be that a girl of your age has her own thoughts. Of what use is that? Nothing will help you but work.

GRISELDA

Surely, my hands are hard enough!

FATHER HELMBRECHT

The hay must be brought in. Our Lord will be gracious to us. It's dripping now. Next week we may have snow. Our Lord knows better than you what is good for our beasts.

[*He goes into the house. A man in the garb of a day-labourer or forest guard looks over the fence.*

THE STRANGER

[*Who has flashing eyes under thick eye-brows.*] What was the old woman scolding about again?

GRISELDA

[*Starts as she becomes aware of the stranger.*] What?

THE STRANGER

I am asking whether the old woman must always be scolding?

GRISELDA

[*Perplexed.*] Who are you?

THE STRANGER

You need not care about that any more than I do. Could one get a drink of water here?

GRISELDA

[*With a motion of her head toward the spring.*] There's water enough yonder.

THE STRANGER

Why so haughty, dear lady of the hay? Can one not get a shard of pottery out of which to drink?

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

There's a cup behind the door, lass.

GRISELDA

I have no time. I have other things to do.

THE STRANGER

Why so ungracious, most lofty cow princess — tell me that?

GRISELDA

Perhaps you are a cow prince!

THE STRANGER

[*Has calmly entered the farmyard and taken a seat on the plough.*] Well answered.— How old are you?

GRISELDA

When you have drunk, you may go your ways.

THE STRANGER

[*Not at all disconcerted.*] How old are you?

GRISELDA

No longer so young that I would chatter vanities with every idler who stops on the road.

THE STRANGER

[*With great serenity.*] Your mother must have been sleeping in a field of ripe wheat when your father made you.

GRISELDA

[*Scarcely trusting her ears, rushes toward him.*] Away! You are a scoundrel! Go!

THE STRANGER

[*As before.*] Far uglier wenches than you have told me that.

GRISELDA

[*Somewhat confused.*] You have escaped from a madhouse.

THE STRANGER

[*Stubbornly.*] And you were made in a field of ripe grain.

[GRISELDA *grasps a spade, turns it about and starts for* THE STRANGER.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Griselda! Have you lost your senses, lass?

THE STRANGER

[*A little pale, but otherwise quite calm.*] Strike! Why do you not strike? I would like well to be slain by just such a wench — with a forehead like yours, with such breasts, with such hips, and with a sheaf of grain on her back.

GRISELDA

[*In complete consternation, throws the spade aside.*] Oh, I have surely better things to do than listen to your sun-struck nonsense.

[*She pushes the barrow into the shed and busies herself*

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

[*Who has been thoughtfully and keenly observing* THE STRANGER.] Father! Father! Some one is here.

THE STRANGER

Do you love gold, mother?

[*He throws several coins into her lap.*

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Father! — There's something uncanny about all this! What is this? [*She sweeps the gold from her apron.*] We have no need of begging or stealing!

THE STRANGER

[*Calmly to* GRISELDA.] Are you going out into the field?

GRISELDA

[*Lifts the yoke of a draught ox from the stable door and does not answer.*]

THE STRANGER

Would you harness the cow to the plough? [*With strangely passionate emphasis.*] Leave the beast in its stable! Harness yourself to the plough! I will grasp the handles and wind the golden reins of your hair about my fists. Are you willing?

GRISELDA

I have fists too!

THE STRANGER

[*Stubbornly.*] I will bind knots into the ropes and reins and strands of your hair and you shall tremble beneath the touch of my scourge!

GRISELDA

[*Grasps* THE STRANGER *and thrusts him out at the little gate.*] Away with you! Out with you!

[*She returns into the yard and closes the gate.*

THE STRANGER

[*Is very pale. He picks up his cap which has dropped off.*] Not bad! I like you.

GRISELDA

[*Stands by the door of the shed and weeps into her apron.*]

THE STRANGER

[*With his hands in his pockets, strolls slowly back into the yard.*] What is the price of a drink of water here, mother?

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

All the days of my life I have gladly given the poor wayfarer a drink of water. I am thinking that you want something else.

THE STRANGER

Are you serfs or tenants in villainage? Are you subject to the monastery or to the lord of the land?

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

What difference can it make to you to whom we are subject? [*Calling into the house.*] Husband! Drink and go your way! Husband! Husband!

[FATHER HELMBRECHT *appears in the door of the house.*

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Why are you crying so, mother?

THE STRANGER

The women cry out because I am thirsty! What? Are you not the very Helmbrecht who, with his frightful horn, in the time of my father, kept the night watch, Summer and Winter, rain, wind or moonshine? Are you not the nightwatchman Helmbrecht of our old hunting-lodge? Are you not the man on whom, after a merry hunting feast, we young men played the trick of pretending to break in to our own castle?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Ay, I suppose I'm still that very man.

THE STRANGER

And do you know who I am?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

And you're still our margrave Ulrich.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

God have mercy on us! I recognised our gracious lord at once.

ULRICH

You gave no evidence of it! — I will have my beard shorn and mix almond meal in my bath, in order that I may resemble those fops who command your respect. How does the world use you, old watchman! I recognise the pious expression you used to wear! Can you assume your thieves' visage too?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

If need be! Although I have little need for it since the old farmer of Freihuben who was as good as a father to my wife died and we inherited the forest farm up here.

ULRICH

Aha! And for that reason, too, your vixenish daughter has broken the ribs in my side.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Griselda, ask his pardon!

ULRICH

Let her be! It does not vex me. I suffer, God knows, neither vexation nor yet temptation on her account! But why is she so rude and unmannerly? No one desires to subdue her. If I desire to ride after a fox, I have mares enough in my stable. And if I set any store by enforcing my authority against the devil that's in her, five words would do it: Send her to the castle!

FATHER HELMBRECHT

[*Scratching the back of his head.*] 'Twould be well enough, my lord, if only I hadn't become a free feudatory.

ULRICH

Rascal that you are! What have you become!

FATHER HELMBRECHT

It cannot be changed now, God help us, and has become law from Milan to Berne and from Berne to Ravenna.

ULRICH

Plant your cabbages in peace; I'll not disturb you. And for all I care you may likewise keep the rancid tribute of your hens! Simply command her to give me a draught of water in a cup. Therewith her obedience may end.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Griselda, give our lord count the water he desires at once!

GRISELDA

No!

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Famine and pestilence strike us all together! What's that?

GRISELDA

[*Takes a milk-pail and, with stubborn determination, goes to the spring.*]

ULRICH

[*With assumed equanimity to* HELMBRECHT.] Have you heard that the growers of vine down by the lake are having a bad year?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

[*First glancing at* GRISELDA.] The devil take us! — Ay, and the olives are turning out badly.

ULRICH

And so are the maidens too, it would seem. [*He is about to take the pail from* GRISELDA *who*

gives it to him.] So! That's right. Obedience is proper to the serf.

GRISELDA

[*Empties the water over his head.*] You need to become sober, sir count; you are drunk!

ULRICH

[*With lightning like rapidity grasps* GRISELDA'S *wrists.*] What? Now you shall learn that a man is not a woman nor a woman a man.

[*He grasps her and carries her into the house.*

GRISELDA

I'll bite you! I'll throttle you! I'll kill you!

[*She is carried into the house and a tumbling and rattling is heard.*

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

The girl has lost her reason.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Ay! Perhaps! But he and the count, his father — they, so help me, never had any to lose!

THE SECOND SCENE

A gallery in the castle of the margrave of Saluzza. From the windows are visible the mirror and the shores of a North Italian lake.

COUNT EBERHARD *is over fifty;* COUNT HEINZ, *his son, is twenty-five.* THE BARONESS *is slender and thirty. She and the two counts are in riding dress.* THE MAJOR-DOMO *and* THE CHAPLAIN *are both in the neighbourhood of forty.*

COUNT EBERHARD

And so no appreciable change of any kind has taken place in his ways?

THE MAJOR-DOMO

None. He dwells in rough servants' quarters. He refuses the dishes which the cooks prepare. He roasts chestnuts with his own hands and devours them without cleansing them of the hot ashes. He drinks water or else the sourest of cheap wines. Wherever he happens to be he eats his coarse bread with cheese or bacon from his bare hand. When the nights are mild he sleeps in the hill-forests with the wild boars. He hides himself in dry foliage at the feeding-places or, at most, lies in a hay barn where, if I am to speak the truth, a chance peasant maid at times keeps him company.

Such is our lord. It is almost as though we had none.

COUNT EBERHARD

What is your opinion of these things, chaplain?

THE CHAPLAIN

It is a thankless task to entertain opinions concerning the peculiarities of ruling lords.

COUNT EBERHARD

My nephew Ulrich must marry!

THE BARONESS

[*Jeeringly.*] Give him a wife! Do give him a wife! Else he will end in a madhouse!

THE CHAPLAIN

I have been told, on the contrary, my lord, that it is just on account of a project of marriage that Lord Ulrich fled from Milan into the country and fell into these mad follies.

COUNT HEINZ

It will be easier for you to persuade a trapped wolf to fetch, in the manner of a retriever, a living lamb, than to cause my original cousin to cross the threshold of a church with a real bride and to the ringing of bells.

THE BARONESS

Not to speak of the fact that such an event would cause a universal laughter from Milan to

Rome and from Rome to Ravenna. One would hear the tittering, I believe, beyond the Alps.

COUNT EBERHARD

It does not matter. Let us be serious. Important matters are at stake. The representatives of the classes are about to assemble. This very day seven confidential agents will meet here to take counsel. There are those who count upon a reversion of the county. And the Agnati develop a most malicious activity.

THE CHAPLAIN

Latet anguis in herba — that is true.

COUNT EBERHARD

According to my opinion he should espouse none other than the Contessa Pirani. She is immediate heir to five great lordships. Her father draws a gigantic income from his twelve or fourteen houses in Milan, Rome, Naples and Genoa. Her age is fourteen and she has the slender growth of a cypress. She is really beautiful beyond all belief.

THE BARONESS

Dearest uncle, it were fitting that you improvise, as an addition to your panegyric, a sonnet on her dyed hair.

THE MAJOR-DOMO

May I be graciously permitted to relate what his serenity, our margrave, deigned to remark concerning this noble and angelic lady?

COUNT EBERHARD

Speak!

THE MAJOR-DOMO

If the Contessa Pirani, naked as God made her, — thus he spoke — will ride through the village on my dark-brown Dutch bull whom none can tame, then take him by the horns and bind him to the manger — I will marry her on the spot.

COUNT EBERHARD

At times the thought assails me whether our enemies are not in the right and my excellent nephew be not proper fodder for the physicians at the Sorbonne and the keepers of the hospital at the grey cloister.

THE MAJOR-DOMO

I think he is merely a misogynist.

THE BARONESS

[*After an outburst of general laughter.*] Ah, major-domo, if you desire to be persuaded of the error of that thought, I advise you to follow his track in the cities of Lombardy; his way is covered with the bitter tears of women deceived and abandoned.

COUNT EBERHARD

God knows that he has not always made it easy for his influential friends to hush up his mad adventures.

[ULRICH *enters in the garb of a peasant — leathern breeches, an open shirt and a pitchfork over his shoulder.*

ULRICH

Dear uncle, dear cousin, dear kinswoman, to what do I owe the honour of your presence?

COUNT EBERHARD

[*Struck with surprise at* ULRICH'S *appearance.*] Forgive us, dear Ulrich, we did not desire to disturb you.

ULRICH

Oh, it's of no importance. I was only helping a maid load the dung.

COUNT EBERHARD

What did you help her load?

ULRICH

Dung! — You will pardon me, cousin. . . .
[*He leans the pitchfork against the wall.*

THE BARONESS

Since you have been dwelling in the country, my illustrious cousin, you have, it would seem, assumed a style of humour no less piercing than that which you once practiced in the city. This proof suffices. You are rising to greater heights.

ULRICH

I have risen, indeed. I would not return to the city for the bosom kerchiefs and garters of the twelve fairest ladies in Lombardy.

COUNT EBERHARD

You were always better fitted, I admit, for the camps of war than for the galleries of princely chambers. But such extreme indulgence in your favourite pursuits as this, I have not witnessed before.

ULRICH

What would you have of me?

COUNT EBERHARD

My dear, most self-willed nephew, in the first place we have held for I do not know the how manieth time a family council . . .

ULRICH

It is probably the one hundred and eleventh time! — Major-domo, cause wine and pastry to be brought.

[*Exit* THE MAJOR-DOMO.

COUNT EBERHARD

Although it is scarcely the one hundred and eleventh time, it is true that in this matter of great import the family council has on five occasions made its decisions in vain. What objection have you to marriage?

ULRICH

None, if only I be not the victim. If you desire, I will give away the bride at some one else's wedding every four weeks and act as godfather every two.

COUNT EBERHARD

The marriage of other people unfortunately avails us nothing.

ULRICH

And my own would avail you less. I am not so cruel as to take a woman to wife. She — or I — would be an object of pity.

THE BARONESS

Therein I must agree with you heartily.

COUNT EBERHARD

There is no help for it. I must make my proposals in proper order. It can scarcely add to your peace of mind to know that enemies are on all sides prowling about your sovereignty. They may not, at once, question your capability to rule. You remain unmarried and thus your succession is problematical.

ULRICH

Very well. If I absolutely must marry, bring me all those fragrant virgins who smell of onions, for none other will I marry. It surprises me that, knowing me, you require an heir to the throne: for I swear to you that my children will rather be imps than bran-stuffed fops in the shapes of dukes and silken duchesses. Their inclinations will be plebeian to such a degree that my present tastes will persuade you that a baker of sweet-meats formed me of the sugar of fruit and the oil of roses. I will never succeed in procreating a great lord who speaks through his nose, not to speak of

a reigning duchess, no matter in how delicate and cleanly a fashion I set about it.

COUNT EBERHARD

My dear Ulrich, may God preserve you your excellent humour. Your indestructible constitution is a sufficient guarantee of the noble quality of your descendants. Your father, too, was given to strong speaking; yet he always came to see that one must either, in a certain sense, be the slave of one's possessions, or else abdicate one's lordship over them as well. You too, a little sooner or later, will yield to the demands of the hour.

ULRICH

Tell me: Have you come, and do those people assemble in the hall, in order to be witnesses of my capture? I swear to you by God that you are mistaken in me and that, so long as I live, I will be able to guard my sovereignty without either a distaff or a petticoat at my side.

COUNT HEINZ

Did you not once throw a kindly eye upon the pretty daughter of Count Tancred?

ULRICH

She would not even climb over a fence because it was tipped with a few shards, although I begged her to do so. She would not even do that in order to assure me of her love. She did not love me.

COUNT HEINZ

[*Laughing.*] Consider, friend and prince! How can an illustrious princess of a reigning house climb a sharded fence for the sake of any one?

ULRICH

How many fences have I not climbed though on no better business than to rob a serving maid of her virginity. No, no! It may be that you are in the right! Nor would I like anything better than to play a trick on that accursed vassal Tommaso of Saluzza who has been long enough casting his greedy glances into my domain. But this matter concerns my very life! And if, after all, I am forced to marry, I would at most consent to take a peasant wench — a lusty armful, so to speak, a bit of common stuff — a wench who can bear a sound thrashing. For a woman who cannot bear a sound thrashing turns the horseman into his beast and lets the horse ride its master.— There, you are all silent again! Very well, it can be done in no other way; nor, unhappily, in this way, since it would violate the laws of our house.

COUNT HEINZ

Did not recently a Count of Tyrol take to wife the daughter of his gamekeeper?

THE CHAPLAIN

Ay, with the imperial consent.

COUNT EBERHARD

Well, I am tempted to say: Rather than have you die without heirs I would be willing to let

you marry whomever you would. Beget children — that is all!

ULRICH

What? I counsel you, dear uncle, to be more sparing of such jests and more careful of such proposals. Who knows! I may take you at your word and our chaplain may have a knot to tie that will rob him of sight and hearing. Moreover, beware that you do not cut off my retreat as though I were a badger or a fox in his hole, and do not fill in with earth all outlets. . . .

[*Servants bring wine and pastry.*

COUNT EBERHARD

Dear nephew, your reception rooms — as you may hear from their footsteps and their murmurs — are filled with your faithful friends and vassals. They are devoted to you. They place all their hopes in you! They have formed a determination, which I must call desperate, to make you — happy. Believe me, your celibate estate will make your relations to them most difficult.

ULRICH

[*Pours down a glass of wine.*] How long a reprieve will I be given?

COUNT HEINZ

As far as I am concerned I would rather to-day than to-morrow be hanged to one of those ivory gallows in a noose of billowy maiden's hair, such as are at your choice.

COUNT EBERHARD

Let us suggest that you take three months. That will give you a space in which to choose. In the fourth month from now the wedding can take place.

ULRICH

[*Gulps down a second glass of wine and wipes the sweat from his forehead.*] Is it not possible in any way, by money or kindness, to escape this frightful calamity?

THE BARONESS

[*With hearty laughter.*] There are always new discoveries to be made concerning a man like you. At times one is led to think that you are an ogre, devouring ladies; at other times the process seems reversed. Since I am a woman you need not wonder that I find the latter thought the more consoling.

COUNT EBERHARD

My noble nephew, I think that one may now rightly be curious as to your decision.

ULRICH

Ay, and your curiosity shall be gorged. Did you mention a space of three months? I am so thoroughly booted and spurred for this adventure, that I would be unembarrassed though the reprieve were shortened to three days. Two days to search for a bride! On the third day a leap, head over heels, into the marriage bed.

COUNT EBERHARD

This world being so rich in evil tongues, such an action, in any one else but yourself would call forth a storm of astonishment.

ULRICH

Very well! The wedding will take place day after to-morrow.

COUNT HEINZ

Then there is nothing for us to do but to invite the guests with all possible haste.

ULRICH

Do so! Drink! And when we have drunk . . .

THE BARONESS

Ah, would I not like to see this incomparable, unapproachable and divine miracle of a woman on her throne above the clouds!

ULRICH

Only don't get too near her, baroness. . . .

THE BARONESS

Does she bite or strike?

ULRICH

That is quite possible! Drink! Not to some doll in a feathered hat! The lovely bondwoman! [*All drink.*] And now that we have drunk let us throw our glasses against the wall!

[*The glasses are hurled against the wall and are shattered.*

THE THIRD SCENE

The little farmyard of HELMBRECHT. HELMBRECHT, MOTHER HELMBRECHT *and* GRISELDA. *The scene is an exact replica of the first.*

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Heigho! A man gets old. Ten years ago I was younger than I am to-day, mother.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

The weaker the beggar, the stronger the crutch.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Begging and working are two different things after all!

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Hurry, Griselda. After a while you must go to the abbey that the tributary shilling be paid punctually.

GRISELDA

I have only two hands, mother.

[*She carries an armful of grass into the stable.*

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Keep an eye on the girl, mother.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

There is no need. She toils and moils whether one watches or not.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Eh, I'm not speaking of that. There are other fears I have for her.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

H-m.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

It is possible that our lord left his mark on her.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

In nine months we will mark it.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Well, and what then?

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Then we will have one more mouth to feed on the farm.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

God strike me dead! You say that so calmly?

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Ay, father. And yet I might rather make an outcry than you. For we women have all the trouble of it.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Mother, I'll run down to the judge.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Oh, gently! Gently!

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Right is right! Is that fellow to ruin our girl?

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

You may have the right on your side. That will not help you to mend your old leathern breeches.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

I tell you . . . I am an honest man. . . . If a bastard is to be born in my house . . . the girl may look to herself!

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Father, beware of such useless talking. You are dependent on the lass. And if you talk nonsense, beware lest some day the mill-wheel in the brook stop, because Griselda has drowned herself in the pool.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Many a one has threatened that who failed to do it thereafter.

[GRISELDA *comes from the shed with a basket and a small ladder. She places the ladder against the apple-tree and, supporting the basket on her head, mounts several rungs.*

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Griselda!

GRISELDA

Ay! What is it?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

That day, in his madness, first in the house, then in the barn — did our lord do you any hurt?

GRISELDA

If ever again I meet that shabby scoundrel I'll cut his throat with this butcher's knife!

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Ay, ay, you will change the course of the world, I suppose.

GRISELDA

Fy! I would not have a child by a wild beast.

[COUNT HEINZ *and* THE FIRST BARON, *in hunting-garb, approach the fence from the highway.*

COUNT HEINZ

Farmer, are your swine feeding on acorns in the wood yonder?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Ay, and I have good sense in my head, too, if it should please you to look in!

COUNT HEINZ

Then use your sense, dung-grubber, for our dogs have torn two swine to pieces in the woods. Look to the carcasses, if they be yours.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

When the Wild Huntsman appears, then the cry is: Give way, poor peasant, or die like a dog.

COUNT HEINZ

Why are you so abristle, little father? We are speaking quite humanly to you? What has angered you so? [*He turns to the* BARON.] Do you see? Our margrave would frame each one of these swinish fellows in gold, and in gratitude therefor they call him the Wild Huntsman!

[COUNT EBERHARD, *also in hunting garb, enters eagerly and with lively gestures.*

COUNT EBERHARD

Are you old Helmbrecht, farmer? Or else tell us where his farm is.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

You have but to open your eyes.

COUNT EBERHARD

Are you old Helmbrecht?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

No other, I suppose.

COUNT EBERHARD

You are said to have a beautiful meadow from which one has a view as far as Bergamo. Have you marked the cooks with their mules and baskets? — Good morning, gentlemen! I must tell

you that the margrave has insisted on the strange idea of having breakfast on that very meadow.

COUNT HEINZ

Riding beside our excellent Ulrich on my horse an uncanny feeling took possession of me. I prefer him when he storms to when for hours he nurses that frozen smile upon his lips and becomes paler instead of ruddier.

[ULRICH *appears surrounded by the gentlemen who are his hunting companions.*

ULRICH

Walk ahead, gentlemen! Why do you stand there?

COUNT HEINZ

My excellent father has conceived a desire for fresh apples. That is all.

COUNT EBERHARD

[*Who cannot take his eyes from* GRISELDA *as she stands among the branches of the tree.*] I wish that my merry friend Teobaldo Goffino the painter were here, in order that he might paint yonder appetising Eve in the tree of Knowledge.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Go into the house, mother. Lock yourself in. Close the door and the shutters.

ULRICH

[*Has stepped up to* EBERHARD, *gazes upward and calls into the greenery of the tree.*] Hallo! Is it possible to get a draught of water here?

GRISELDA

[*Without interrupting herself.*] There is water enough yonder.

ULRICH

Why so haughty, lovely lass o' the rye? May one not have a shard of pottery here out of which to drink, illustrious cow princess.

GRISELDA

You are probably a cow prince!

ULRICH

Well answered! How old are you?

[FATHER HELMBRECHT *has gently thrust his wife into the house. His hand on the knob he stands, sharply observant, at the door. The answer of* GRISELDA *has been received by the gentlemen at first with astonishment, then with horror, finally with laughter. In the meantime, entering from the road at the left a splendid company of comely ladies, led by* THE BARONESS, *has made its appearance.*

COUNT EBERHARD

In vain! She holds us worthy of no further answer! Such children of Anak at times nurse the pride of thirty generations of ancestors in their bodies.

COUNT HEINZ

And what a body, dear father, in this instance.

ULRICH

[*Hums.*] "A knight was toying with a lass!" Approach, ladies and gentlemen!

THE BARONESS

Here we are! Can any one tell me what, in addition to the apples, there is so wonderful to be seen in that tree? Why do you gentlemen all stare into the branches?

COUNT HEINZ

It would seem that several among them have a desire for fresh apples.

THE BARONESS

[*Takes an apple and bites into it.*] This tree bears only sour apples.

ULRICH

I am thirsty. [*To* HELMBRECHT.] Bid your daughter Griselda give me a draught of water in a cup of some kind.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Griselda, give our gracious lord a drink of water at once.

GRISELDA

Whoever wishes to drink may put his mouth to the spout.

COUNT HEINZ

Wench, do you know whom you are addressing?

ULRICH

Have patience, ladies and gentlemen! In good time this milkmaid will commit indiscretions of a far different sort. Baroness, is not her form magnificent?

THE BARONESS

I will judge of it when her idle and impertinent tongue has been effectually curbed. Furthermore, if such morsels of the peasantry attract you, our wash kitchens hold dozens of princesses of her kind.

ULRICH

And so you find no notable qualities in her?

THE BARONESS

I would not go so far as to say that. If she were thoroughly cleaned she might, in time, become a tolerable tiring-woman. Why not?

[GRISELDA'S *basket is now filled with apples. She lifts it to her head and slowly descends the rungs of the ladder. When she has reached the ground* ULRICH *bars her way and stares at her.*

ULRICH

[*After a brief silence.*]

" Weep not, weep not, dear maiden mine,
I'll give thee a rider bold
To heal thee of thy grievous hurt,
And ducats of red gold! "

GRISELDA

Let me pass, my lord.

ULRICH

Nay! Griselda, do you know that I am forced to marry?

GRISELDA

[*Holds the basket on her head with her left hand; with her right she draws a knife from her bosom.*] And I have a butcher's knife in my hand.

ULRICH

Griselda!

GRISELDA

Keep your distance!

[*The company bursts out in laughter.*

ULRICH

'Tis well. To him among you men who succeeds in stealing a kiss from this maiden I will give my estate Schoenbuche.

THE SECOND BARON

[*Steps forth, regards* GRISELDA, *turns up his nose and moves indignantly away.*] The estate might tempt me!

ULRICH

Well?

THE THIRD BARON

[*With the same demeanour as* THE SECOND BARON.] We will return in a fortnight. Let her be brushed and combed and bathed twice daily during that space! Let not the green soap be spared

and let her be hung, like linen, in the sun. Then we may discuss the estate again.

ULRICH

Griselda, I give Schoenbuche to you.

GRISELDA

I have not asked you for it, sir count!

ULRICH

It is of such lasses that true duchesses are made, I tell you.

THE BARONESS

Were that true, my ladies, then it were also true that we were of the right stuff for stable wenches.

THE FIRST BARON

Schoenbuche, your highness? I will make the attempt.

ULRICH

'Tis well. But she has a pointed knife in her hand and will use it.

[GRISELDA *awaits her assailant with rage and tears. The* BARON *approaches her. Before the mighty waving of her knife he recoils, stumbles and is supported by those nearest him.*

THE FIRST BARON

Oh! Oh!

[*General laughter.*

ULRICH

Bravo, Griselda! Show these weaklings that you were made for men of a different stamp. Thus should you go to work!

[*Swiftly, before she has time to defend herself he grasps* GRISELDA'S *wrists, shakes the knife out of her hand and kisses her despite her struggles.*

ULRICH

Griselda, speak, do you yield yourself to me?

GRISELDA

I will not! You are to let me be!

ULRICH

Yield, Griselda!

GRISELDA

You *shall* let me be!

ULRICH

You were free once, Griselda! Now you are mine!

COUNT HEINZ

Enough! She is being throttled in your arms.

ULRICH

It is enough that she is not forced to be throttled in the arms of one of you.

THE BARONESS

You are no centaur, lord! Let her go! Do you not see that she is almost swooning.

ULRICH

It is her own will. Ask her and she will tell you: A woman destined to love loses her will.

THE BARONESS

I will consider the answer as having been given.

ULRICH

And thus I command you, Griselda: Be my wife!

THE BARONESS

She has only moved her lips and yet I would swear that the word which her lips breathed was: Yes. Nor can I withhold my agreement any longer. I really believe that you would be but ill served with a wife of a less vigorous constitution and that the lady in question would be even more wretched.

ULRICH

Well, Baroness, as far as your last prediction is concerned, I will pray God that he help me give it the lie! [*He turns to the company.*] I am no longer your margrave of Saluzza unless this woman is your margravine!

COUNT EBERHARD

[*To* HELMBRECHT *who stands, open-mouthed, in the extremity of wonder.*] So it is! Close your mouth, little farmer!

THE FOURTH SCENE

The garden of the margrave's palace. A terrace adjoins it with stairs leading down. From the terrace doors give upon the banqueting hall. From within resounds music and the noise of a great festivity — the marriage feast of Ulrich *and* Griselda. *The doors are opened and a part of the gorgeous company streams over terrace and stairs into the garden. Among the guests appear* Count Eberhard, The Countess Eberhard, Count Heinz, The Baroness, The First, Second *and* Third Barons. *It is a magnificent day of Autumn.*

Count Eberhard

One must needs confess that her appearance is nobler than one would have thought. She is beautiful. She is a child of the people, to be sure. But, if you search far enough, so are we. The oak may be an oak but it is rooted in the same earth as the turnip.

Countess Eberhard

Thus has he been philosophising all day. He began before he slipped into his dressing-gown. And his ideas increased in boldness when he saw a gaily decked peasant lass enter the church and,

in the guise of a margravine, issue therefrom amid the jubilations of the vulgar. The wise saws which, from the beginning of the feast, he has improvised could well be printed.

THE BARONESS

I confess freely that I hoped up to the last moment the imperial consent would be withheld. A matter of this kind may present a tolerably fair aspect now. The day of reckoning will not tarry.

COUNT EBERHARD

Did you see the chaplain during the ceremony shed great tears?

COUNT HEINZ

Her appearance, at all events, is enchanting.

THE BARONESS

So long as she does not, by some chance, expose her calloused hands.

COUNT EBERHARD

I have heard toothless old men twitter her praise. All men are utterly charmed by the frank dignity of her demeanour.

THE FIRST BARON

And the margrave more than any.

COUNT EBERHARD

A fact which, all things considered, has its undoubted propriety.

THE SECOND BARON

Had you ever believed our lord capable of so gay and merry a mood as is his to-day?

THE THIRD BARON

He would embrace the whole world.

COUNT EBERHARD

Heavens! Who in all Lombardy will go to bed half so joyfully to-day?

THE BARONESS

I, at least, will sleep better.

COUNT EBERHARD

The little baroness is ever ready-witted.

THE BARONESS

One must admit, at all events, that he has an iron forehead and an iron will.

THE FIRST BARON

The illustrious margravine is just stepping out into the open with her spouse at her left and the Prince of Bologna at her right.

[GRISELDA, *magnificently garbed in brocade, upon her head the crown of the margravine, appears on the terrace supported by her husband and accompanied at her right by the aged prince. The music summons to softness and the guests break out in enthusiastic acclamation.*]

GRISELDA

I did not know until to-day, my beloved, that the world could appear to one in such guise. Did it keep all its goodness hidden heretofore? Has it been so sparing thereof only to pour it out now in a great flood? I look in upon myself and I do not know who I am! I look about me and I cannot learn it either. I am living an illusion or else I have lived one until now.— I am quite defenceless. But indeed against what do I need defence? Against love? My arms are sapless and powerless! But they need no strength in their blessed idleness.— This is no meadow land. How many meadows have I mowed with the blind swinging of the scythe! But how could one bear to lay waste these flowers? I would hesitate to step upon them. How much more to mow them down with the whistling steel.— And you have given me new eyes. I was wont to think these people haughty, prince! To-day I see that they are kindly as children.

THE PRINCE

They are like children, illustrious margravine. But do you truly know what children are like?

ULRICH

He means to say: They are, at times, very malicious.

THE PRINCE

The spirit will sometimes avail to weaken the rudeness of mere force. A rich spirit prevails against earth through renunciation, but cannot conquer it. But these men have conquered the earth

and hold it fast by mere physical tooth and claw — if need be, by the very hair.

ULRICH

I must contradict your Serenity. Most of these know neither the spirit that rises above the earth nor have they the necessary organs wherewith to conquer it truly. They are children who have forgotten their mother and whom therefore, in her turn, their mother has forgotten too. [*His voice is raised so that it reaches the whole assembly.*] I thank you for that you have come to the marriage feast of a man whose nature and whose life you could not comprehend. In your eyes I was a ruffian or a mere beast. You detested me and I, as I must confess, was not displeased with that detestation. For to live according to my profoundest instincts I stood in no need of your approbation.— He who avoids honest combat shall enjoy no honourable peace. He who despises the earthy can have no vision of the exquisite. He who spurns the clod cannot honour the grass that springs therefrom. I desired the grasp of my hand to be hard and passionate; I desired to be greatly and passionately held and clasped. [*He kisses* GRISELDA'S *hand.*] Therefore did I force this woman to yield herself to me. [*Loud applause is heard.*] I needed a woman in whose veins still lives the first glow of the great act of creation: a woman made of the rib of man by God the Father, thrust forth by him from Paradise, an Eve and a daughter of Eve driven into the stony wastes that she might turn these wastes into gardens by the power of her breath and by the sweat of her limbs.

I desired the immemorial woman, defiant in her sin, the enemy of God and of the snake in the garden of Eden. I am the old Adam and nothing less could content me than the old nobility of Eve. I desired the strong companion of man with her ancient weapons — the sickle, the spade and the mattock. Else I desired never to see a woman at my side.

[*A little group of country-folk, in their best clothes, take up their stand at the foot of the stairs. One carries a scythe, adorned with ribands, the second a spade, the third a measure of mixed grain.* Ulrich *descends from the steps, takes the measure of grain and holds it out toward one of the ladies.*

Ulrich

Pick up a grain, fair bird, and tell us its kind.

The First Lady

Since I am a fair bird, I should judge it to be bird seed.

Ulrich

Wrong! What is it, Griselda?

Griselda

[*Laughing, takes the grain from the lady.*] It is a grain of barley.

Ulrich

Do you pick one, gay woodpecker! What is it?

THE SECOND LADY

Rye.

ULRICH

Griselda?

GRISELDA

It is a grain of wheat.

ULRICH

[*To* THE BARONESS.] Now you, clever magpie!

THE BARONESS

[*Amidst the laughter of the company she too picks a grain.*] One may tell at a glance that it is linseed.

ULRICH

Griselda!

GRISELDA

Where is the grain? That which I hold is a shaving of wood!

[*There is great laughter among the company.*

ULRICH

You would bake sawdust into my bread. And now approach, fair ladies — all of you who feel that you possess the true and ancient nobility of Eve. [*He takes up the scythe.*] Here is a thing which is shown in the escutcheon of death and also in the billowy, gold-shot banner of life. Who among you knows how to wield it?

THE THIRD LADY

Give me the monstrous thing! I'll try it! Fy, no! I cannot touch it!

ULRICH

Griselda!

GRISELDA

[*Laughing to* THE PRINCE.] Your Serenity, I must take my leave and go obediently a-mowing on my sweetheart's field.

[*She lifts her robe delicately and with swiftness and vigour hastens down the stairs. She immediately takes the scythe and regards it.*] But it is dull! One must sharpen it first! [*A whetstone is brought her and she whets the scythe skilfully, speaking the while:*]

"He whets him his scythe,
It cuts strong and lithe;
Oh, soon will he mow,
And the flowers must go!"

[*She gives back the whetstone. Suddenly she seems lost in thought. Leaning on the scythe she becomes unaware of the scene.*]

"Oh, beware, little flower!"

ULRICH

Where are you in your thoughts, Griselda?

GRISELDA

[*As though awakening.*] I? Have I been idle? Ask our sister the scythe and our brother the spade,

beloved, where I have been. [*She takes the scythe, goes out upon the sward and halts again.*] Suddenly it seems to me as though the world had become harsh again and the meadow a mere meadow and the grass only grass. [*Observing a tender look in* Ulrich's *eyes she throws her head back happily and begins to mow vigorously. Always after two strokes of the scythe she repeats one of the following verses:*]

" 'Twixt the sowing and the swath
Lies of life the stony path.
Iron arm and iron plough,
Iron sun, God help us now!
Iron foot and iron dearth,
Harsh want doth fill the earth.
Harsh want and barren fret,
Bread that's bitter with our sweat."

Ulrich

Have you heard the old, eternal little verses which she murmurs, ladies and gentlemen?

The First Lady

What kind of verses are they?

Ulrich

Our ancestors to whom we owe all that we are had the memory of them firmly in their minds.

The First Baron

Her Highness sang a song of the sword; scarcely a mowing-song.

ULRICH

You are wrong.

THE BARONESS

[*To* ULRICH.] Take the scythe from her hand or she will mow bare the whole garden of love. We see that she is obedient to a mere word.

COUNT HEINZ

To be sure, the daughter of Count Tancred was scarcely as obedient.

THE BARONESS

I wonder whether she will also have to climb over sharded walls.

ULRICH

I thank you, Griselda, it is enough.

[GRISELDA *does not interrupt her work.*

THE PRINCE

She is like a royal angel in the glow of some heavenly game upon the meadows of Eden.

COUNT EBERHARD

The mown grass flies! Good luck, you royal mower!

ULRICH

[*Touches* GRISELDA *softly.*] Griselda! Awaken! Forget us not!

GRISELDA

[*Absorbed in her toil.*] Step aside. I must be done at the ringing of the *Ave Maria!*

ULRICH

Griselda!

GRISELDA

[*Ceases and looks at him with estranged eyes.*]

ULRICH

Illustrious margravine Griselda, bethink yourself!

GRISELDA

[*Absently.*] I believe we will have rain to-morrow.

ULRICH

[*Taking her into his arms.*] Nay, you blessed mower, remember who you are. To-morrow we will have sunshine!

THE FIFTH SCENE

The gallery of the palace of the margrave as in the second scene. Since the events of the previous scene eight months have elapsed. The North Italian spring has come. THE BARONESS, *the* CHAPLAIN *and* THE PHYSICIAN, *a man slightly grey and of noble demeanour, walk up and down engaged in muffled conversation.*

THE PHYSICIAN

The marriage of the margrave is known all over the land, your reverence. I have heard wonderful things concerning it.

THE CHAPLAIN

Were these reports good or evil in their nature?

THE PHYSICIAN

Men spoke in terms of the highest praise. I remember to have heard it especially emphasised that this unspoiled child of the people had made of her lord, who had been said to have various irregular inclinations, a gentle and a happy man.

THE BARONESS

These people have permitted themselves to be deceived.

THE CHAPLAIN

The Countess Griselda is a saint.

THE BARONESS

It is not to be denied that, after what had gone before, we had nursed other fears — of benches and tables being broken, of plates and ewers being hurled about. And thus the appearance has actually been as though this strange choice — through the gentle influence of our village beauty — was about to blossom into a miracle. The wildness of the margrave was softened. His roughness was followed by a sweetish tenderness. His universally feared preference for the ways of a day labourer changed into an ultra-appropriate sensibility. It really seemed as though this lass knew how to ride the steer, or at least how to lead him by an invisible nose-ring.

THE PHYSICIAN

At all events this marriage is in harmony with the spirit of the common folk. It has made the lord of Saluzza the most popular man in Lombardy.

THE BARONESS

It may be so. But it is to be questioned whether such a degree of popularity is not to be feared rather than envied. He is actually celebrated in the songs of the street.

THE PHYSICIAN

A folksong is not necessarily a street song.

THE CHAPLAIN

I know very well which song you mean and I was present at the pleasant incident which inspired the poet.— It was on the occasion of the wedding. The margrave was in a radiant mood and swam in a veritable sea of bliss. Suddenly he bade the newly made margravine exhibit to the company proofs of her skill in certain ancient and honourable arts which an evil education is likely to neglect — such as mowing grass and digging up the earth with a spade. You will soon see the margravine, good master. Her equal for beauty is probably not to be found in all the realm of the iron crown. On that day she wore a robe of heavy brocade. The crown was upon her head and pearls were woven into the mighty mane of her glorious, wheat-golden tresses. Yet she hesitated not for a moment. She cut the grass so that the blades flew. She took the spade from the gardener's hand and dug like a serf so that the clods crunched.

THE BARONESS

The intoxication has fled! The charm of this rustic adventure, so grave in its results, has become, like the charm of many another, dull and blunted.

THE PHYSICIAN

Does the margrave know that I am here?

THE CHAPLAIN

Although the heavy hour of the margravine approaches nearer and nearer, he did not know of

your presence until yesterday, nor did he count upon it.

THE PHYSICIAN

So the very worst has happened which can happen in such a case as this: the beautiful passion of the reigning lord has cooled off.

THE BARONESS

If that were all! But I fear that the passion has become transformed into its opposite.

THE CHAPLAIN

In that opinion I must contradict you.

THE BARONESS

You cannot deny that the margrave is seeking to deprive the pitiable woman during the heavy time that is coming upon her, of every assistance. Nor will you be able to deny that he looks forward to the coming heir to his throne without a spark of natural paternal feeling. In truth, measures have already been taken to get rid of the newborn child without any knowledge on the part of the unsuspecting mother who is knitting little socks and sewing little shifts.

THE PHYSICIAN

To get rid of it? What do you mean?

THE CHAPLAIN

Let us not think of this plan as anything worse than that the child is to be given into the care of

Count Eberhard and his aged spouse. But it seems in truth as though he set little store by the child, whether it be a girl or even a boy. Indeed, recently, in the chapel when I could not but mention the new life in my prayers, I observed his expression which at once became hard and sombre.

THE BARONESS

She would have done better to lay about her with the legs of tables, to continue to pour water over his head and to throw stools at him. It is not to be endured however that Ulrich should now make this harmless peasant woman, after he has broken her own healthy will, pay the price of his madness.

[*The* BARONESS *withdraws.*

THE PHYSICIAN

Can you tell me in how far the words of this lady are to be taken as true coin and not counterfeit?

THE CHAPLAIN

In so far as you are able to discount the effect of an old disappointment upon a character not evil in itself.

[ULRICH *enters suddenly.* THE CHAPLAIN *withdraws.*

ULRICH

[*Who is magnificently clad.*] You are a physician. Who called you hither?

THE PHYSICIAN

I have been told that my summons came from the members of your house, strangely enough without your consent.

ULRICH

Then it is clear that I will be forced to impress upon those who constantly confer these undesired favours upon me that I alone, and no other, am master in this house.

THE PHYSICIAN

I cannot discover any evil intention, your highness, in the extreme care that one takes of your spouse.

ULRICH

You do not understand that! You may, when the time comes, give commands to her tiring-women. You may give orders as to what must be done.

THE PHYSICIAN

The tiring-women will assist me, undoubtedly.

ULRICH

You misunderstand. I must request you to give heed. I am not accustomed, and especially not in this house, to have even a gesture of mine misunderstood! You are to give your orders and the tiring-women alone are to cross the threshold of her ladyship's chamber.

THE PHYSICIAN

You do not mean, assuredly, that I am not to enter the chamber of the Countess Griselda.

ULRICH

That is exactly my meaning. In addition, it suffices that you say "her ladyship."

THE PHYSICIAN

But of course it is unavoidable that I enter the chamber of her ladyship.

ULRICH

Then I will have my grooms scourge you forth with whips.

THE PHYSICIAN

[*Turns curtly, stretches out his head a little and looks at* ULRICH.] You have no cause to affront me. I have more cause to be affronted if you intend to rob me of the time which, for your sake, I am taking from the alleviation of other suffering men and women. Farewell!

[*He turns to go.*

ULRICH

You will remain here, for we have need of you. But you will not set your foot across the threshold of my spouse's chamber.

THE PHYSICIAN

[*Observing him keenly.*] Your highness, one does not leave the very beasts of the field without help when their hour has come upon them. It is in

vain that you try to persuade me that you intend to rob the illustrious lady Griselda of equal help in her need.

ULRICH

I have already told you that it suffices for you to say "her ladyship." I do not desire that the name Griselda which I utter but rarely and with reverence should be mouthed, like a common morsel, by a new plebeian every five minutes. Enough! Speak on! You are a surgeon. I trust that we will stand in no need of you.

THE PHYSICIAN

I entertain the same hope. [*Upon the face of* THE PHYSICIAN *is visible the surprise of a discovery he has just made.*] I have known other men, your highness, who puzzled those around them with the same riddle. They muffled themselves equally in ferocity desiring to hide an almost ludicrous sensitiveness and tenderness of their inner selves. Pardon my circumlocutions. The simple thing I would say is this: Each of them was — what is rare today — a man! At all events I hope that you have sturdy men about the house. For later when the heavy hour of your spouse has come I will propose to have you chained in your own prison.

ULRICH

Your professional impudence is great.

THE PHYSICIAN

My science is not impudent, but unafraid and mighty. The mightiest of this earth must learn to endure and to be silent at her feet.

ULRICH

And you take the wives of these mighty ones, of lords and kings, these ladies who, though they be muffled to the eyes may not be brushed by the unpunished glance of a serf — you take them and strip them to their shifts and touch them as though they were harlots and for sale.

THE PHYSICIAN

We touch them! And if there be need we cut them with sharp knives.

ULRICH

[*Grasps a chair and sinks upon it in sudden weakness.*] I am sweating blood! I am not equal to the brutalities of life! What does it mean? Why must she give birth? I do not desire a son. I hate the child in her womb. She is mine. I have caused the cats to be poisoned because she caressed them. And I have conceived an alien creature who will suck the blood from her breasts!

THE PHYSICIAN

In what opinions, amid what teachings and taught by whom did you grow up, my lord?

ULRICH

Among the wild boars, if you please, who devour their young.

THE PHYSICIAN

[*Not without friendly irony.*] You are pale to the roots of your hair. Will you not drink a glass of port?

ULRICH

[*Leaps up.*] The devil take all of you!

[*He hastens out;* THE PHYSICIAN *looks after him;* THE CHAPLAIN *reenters.*

THE CHAPLAIN

You are alone?

THE PHYSICIAN

Ay. He left me with my head ringing but with my heart not chilled.

THE CHAPLAIN

I trembled! Exorcising is not my trade. But when the margrave began to sin against himself and to curse the fruit of his marriage, it almost seemed to me as though I should summon an exorcist.

THE PHYSICIAN

I beg of your reverence, conduct me to the margravine. Furthermore, with your permission, I shall institute a slight examination of your power of vision . . . and even more of the power of vision of your baroness.

THE SIXTH SCENE

The chambers of the margravine GRISELDA. *The room in which she sits is darkened by curtains.* GRISELDA *in a rich garment sits in an armchair by the window. One of the tiring-women stands observing her.* GRISELDA *has pushed back the curtain and is looking thoughtfully out into the open.*

GRISELDA

[*After a lengthy silence.*] Do you hear the cuckoo calling, nurse?

THE TIRING WOMAN

Very distinctly, my lady. The call can be heard all the long day now.

GRISELDA

At this season we had our hands full of work at home. [*Softly to herself.*] Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Ah, how long have I still to live? — Tell me, did the baroness ask after me again?

THE TIRING WOMAN

Several times, my lady. I said that you were weary and desired to sleep.

GRISELDA

She did me many kindnesses at first. I must be grateful to her.

THE TIRING WOMAN

But her presence yesterday did not have a good influence on you. You were restless all night.

GRISELDA

The baroness is clever. She talks of so many clever things that one cannot contradict her at all. Very often I could not even understand her.

THE TIRING WOMAN

One must admit that since she came she has been tireless in her anxiety for your ladyship's welfare.

GRISELDA

I wish she had not come.

[*A* SECOND TIRING WOMAN *enters.*

THE SECOND TIRING WOMAN

A poor little peasant is without.

GRISELDA

[*Quickly.*] Bring him in.

THE SECOND TIRING WOMAN

My lady, the little peasant is very shabby. He brings some young pigeons. Had he not better be sent to the kitchen?

GRISELDA

[*Quite simply.*] You seem not to know, dear nurse, that the shabby little peasant is my father.

THE SECOND TIRING WOMAN

Your ladyship is pleased to jest. I know very well that your ladyship's father is a cousin of the king of France.

GRISELDA

[*Again quite simply.*] You are wrong, good nurse. You will see at once that my father is not a cousin of the king of France. Bring him in.

[THE SECOND TIRING WOMAN *opens the door and old* HELMBRECHT *in his Sunday garb, carrying a little basket, enters.*

FATHER HELMBRECHT

God greet you, gracious margravine!

GRISELDA

I thank you, dear father. How fares my mother?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

[*Who stands humbly near the door.*] Mother sends you this balsam, gracious lady. You are to anoint both breasts therewith before you give the child suck. Also when you take the child from the breast you are to use it. You are to do it daily, your mother says.

GRISELDA

Let me see it! [HELMBRECHT *approaches hesitatingly and hands her the vial from afar.*]

Place the vial in safety, nurse. Tell my mother I thank her from my heart, father.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

And here is some tea made of China asters against the pains of child birth. Mother dried the flowers in the baking oven. They grow, as you will remember, close to the old wall not far from the henhouse.

GRISELDA

[*With quiet seriousness while the Tiring Women restrain their laughter with difficulty.*] There, take the tea also, good nurse, and place it aside.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

[*To the Tiring Women.*] Do not forget to give it to her when the pains come upon her. It helps. It helped my wife, her mother, when she gave birth to the gracious lady.

GRISELDA

Why did mother not come with you?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

She said: Do you go! If you see our daughter it will be the same.

GRISELDA

How goes it with the farm?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

We miss you, gracious lady. We are too old.

GRISELDA

And the maid whom the margrave hired to take my place.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

The maid does not do well, gracious lady. She is lazy. The calf that you brought up by hand is dead of a dysentery. The swine do not fatten. You had always so lucky a way with the cattle. And the wench is weakly. By this time you had always carried fifty barrows of dung upon the fields; she has carried only thirty.

GRISELDA

Do not laugh, nurse. It is just the simple truth that he is speaking. It was good training for me.— Tell me, father, have you still the great Indian cock and the three hens that lay eggs as large as goose eggs?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

I have brought you a dozen of them, and three young pigeons for your childbirth soup. Gracious lady, we wish you all happiness in what is before you. Mother bade me say that she prays daily and hourly for your happy delivery.

GRISELDA

Bless me, my father.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

[*Makes the sign of the cross over her head.*] In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.— Farewell.

[*He turns to go.*

GRISELDA

Farewell, father. Pray also for my poor soul. One never knows what God may decree.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

[*Hesitates.*] Ay. Farewell! What else was there? Oh, yes. Mother wanted so much to know, gracious lady . . .

GRISELDA

Speak!

FATHER HELMBRECHT

You must know that rumours have been spread abroad . . .

GRISELDA

Rumours of what kind? [*To the Tiring Women who start to withdraw.*] Stay on. You do not disturb us.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

All that mother wanted to know was . . . was simply whether you are happy?

GRISELDA

Tell my mother that I love my husband and my lord with all my heart, with all my being, with all the force of my sinful soul.

[ULRICH *enters suddenly.*

ULRICH

Peasant, what are you doing here? Be off with you!

[FATHER HELMBRECHT *hurries out through the door.*

ULRICH

Must you be always surrounded by peasant folk and servants?

[*At a gesture of* GRISELDA *the two Tiring Women withdraw.*

ULRICH

What business have all these indifferent people in our house? How do you concern them? Or they us? Just now a dog of a pill-monger came! What does he want? What do they all want? Why do they cling to you as crabs do to a piece of carrion and thrust me away? Why do you weep?

GRISELDA

I believe I weep because you suffer.

ULRICH

Some one is subtly robbing me of you! A heavy hand is upon you. Whose? I clasp you and would hold you: you are changed in my very embrace. You are going from me. Griselda, I am like one who runs after a heavy waggon. Eight great horses drag it calmly along a road that leads to an abyss. I would plunge my hands between the spokes of the wheels. I would. . . . But the spokes shatter my fingers and the waggon rolls on. No giant could hold it back. Shall we flee, Griselda?

GRISELDA

[*In his embrace.*] My poor beloved, whither shall we flee?

ULRICH

Griselda?

GRISELDA

Well?

ULRICH

What are you thinking of, Griselda? Just now when that fugitive smile lit up your face — what were you thinking of? Why do you hesitate to answer me?

GRISELDA

I do not hesitate.

ULRICH

You do! You are withholding something from me.

GRISELDA

I have no secret from you, beloved.

ULRICH

Then tell me why, in the midst of your tears, you smiled.

GRISELDA

I would bear my child in the forest, upon a couch of leaves, not in the castle. I would have no one present but you.

ULRICH

Ah, do you see? You thought of the child. You were far away from me in your thought and I held a dead and alien body in my eager arms.

GRISELDA

No, you are holding your wife in your arms.

ULRICH

Do you think I failed to observe that you have smiled again?

GRISELDA

I am not conscious of having done so.

ULRICH

And yet again you thought of the child, of the child — only of the child! That is the truth! Deny it! I feel, I see, I know that every word and glance and breath, that every beat of your heart would belie your words.

GRISELDA

Do you not want a child?

ULRICH

I want you! What is the child to me?

THE SEVENTH SCENE

A room in a garden house level with the ground. The door to the garden is open. A spiral staircase leads to the upper chambers. It is forenoon.

The old COUNTESS EBERHARD *has fallen asleep sitting by an oval table in the middle of the room.* THE BARONESS *descends the spiral stairs.*

COUNTESS EBERHARD

[*Starts from her sleep.*] How is she?

THE BARONESS

Her patience is remarkable. These peasant women have a power of resistance in the enduring of pain which can induce the suspicion in one that they are altogether insensitive to it. I must add that she asked for the margrave.

COUNTESS EBERHARD

Poor thing! It were better she did not ask for him since he seems to care about her not at all. At least no man knows whither he has withdrawn. Eberhard and my boy have hunted all over the castle and the vicinity for miles. Moreover I have now been sitting here for twelve hours. I am too old for such things. I feel ready to faint.

THE BARONESS

All things possible are being done. She wants for no help. If I were you I would go and rest.

COUNTESS EBERHARD

How is that possible? We must lie in wait like hungry beasts of prey in order to snatch the newborn child at once from the eyes of its affectionate father. God knows that my nephew Ulrich is burdened neither with an exaggerated sense of tenderness nor with a false loyalty to his race. I would truly believe that a peasant woman had given birth to him in a stable if he were not uninterruptedly and terribly beset by the moods of a tyrant.

THE BARONESS

I doubt whether the mother will so easily permit herself to be robbed of her child.

COUNTESS EBERHARD

It will be taken from her for the simple reason that it is best so for both mother and child. Were it to remain here, I would entertain the worst fears. For I assure you that Ulrich is so enraged against the yet unborn babe as though, in another world, he had had a bloody and irreconcilable feud with it.

THE BARONESS

One hardly knows what to wish or hope for!

COUNTESS EBERHARD

Of the three possibilities that come into consideration, it is but just to leave the best and most

favourable unmentioned. The second best would be if a boy were to be born. The worst for father, mother and child would be if a girl were to be born. May heaven prevent that.

THE BARONESS

The one thing, dear aunt, that inclines one to look with a degree of gentleness upon the self-caused misery of the margrave is that his aversion to marriage and his determination to remain unwed were forcibly broken.

COUNTESS EBERHARD

And that fact has caused my poor old Eberhard many difficult weeks and months.— By the way, he seems to have been found.

THE BARONESS

Are we to remain here?

COUNTESS EBERHARD

God forbid! I am afraid. Old as I am, if I but hear his voice from afar, I hurry away like a magpie.

[*The two ladies rapidly ascend the spiral stairs. Immediately thereupon* ULRICH *appears. He is restless, worn out with sleeplessness, very pale. He enters from the garden followed by* COUNT EBERHARD, COUNT HEINZ, THE CHAPLAIN, THE MAJOR-DOMO *and several servants.*

ULRICH

You desire to play at dice or at cards? Very well. Let us kill the time. It deserves no better of us.

COUNT HEINZ

Will you not make yourself comfortable, cousin?

ULRICH

I believe my comfort would increase if I could lie down on a pointed shard! Have you, too, that accursed humming in your ears?

COUNT HEINZ

The weir by the moat is swollen. It must have rained in the hills.

ULRICH

Can't we do something that involves a degree of exercise?

COUNT HEINZ

You have been on your feet all night, it seems. But if your courage still holds out I am at your service. Let us climb the fire ladders up the chimneys.

COUNT EBERHARD

[*Softly to* THE CHAPLAIN.] What is wrong with him? Do you understand it?

THE CHAPLAIN

So far as I understand it, it is not what one calls in a man indifference toward the sufferings of his wife.

ULRICH

I would prefer to see some wild beast of prey break out from its cage in some menagerie in the neighbourhood.

COUNT HEINZ

[*Softly.*] I swear to you that he does not know where he is. He is actually loosening the dagger at his girdle.

COUNT EBERHARD

Go, dear Heinz, and call the physician.

THE CHAPLAIN

[*Approaches* ULRICH *who has turned his back to the company and stares out into the garden.*] Do not forget, dear lord, that in any pain or perplexity of the soul you will find a faithful counsellor in me.

COUNT HEINZ

Will you not lay aside your belt?

ULRICH

Nay! Why?

COUNT EBERHARD

And put aside your weapon, dear boy. You seem not to know that you have a dagger in your hand.

ULRICH

It is true. What did I want to do with the dagger?

COUNT HEINZ

You desired, I believe, to slay some wild beast at large that is not in existence at all.

ULRICH

[*Growing pale.*] What was that?

THE CHAPLAIN

[*With a furtive gesture that bids the others be silent.*] Do you mean the cry of the jackdaw that flew across the garden?

ULRICH

I have never heard jackdaws cry but I wish that this bird had an arrow through its body.

COUNT HEINZ

Will you not let me have your dagger?

ULRICH

Why? The place for that knife is in my girdle.

[*He replaces the dagger in its sheath. To a servant who has approached at a silent command from* THE MAJOR-DOMO.

ULRICH

What would you?

THE SERVANT

I believed that your highness desired to lay your belt aside.

ULRICH

Very well. It matters little. There! [*The belt with the dagger is taken from the margrave. He stretches himself and sighs deeply.*] I feel no greater comfort yet.

THE CHAPLAIN

Perhaps you had better close the window, Major-domo.

ULRICH

[*Swiftly.*] Do you love foul air?

THE CHAPLAIN

Not at all, my lord.

ULRICH

Why did you drag my belt from me?

THE MAJOR-DOMO

It lies in the ante-room, your highness. Shall I fetch it?

ULRICH

Wine!

COUNT EBERHARD

We have provided some. We have had a sample taken from the keg of Burgundy that is five years old.

[*Servants enter with wine.*

ULRICH

All the better. Pour it! [ULRICH, *the glass in his hand, turns pale again and listens.*] Was that

another of your crows, your jackdaws or your ravens?

THE CHAPLAIN

I cannot tell, your highness.

ULRICH

How fares my wife?

COUNT HEINZ

[*With a touch of frivolousness.*] She fares like the majority of women who have made the mistake of marrying men.

ULRICH

[*With sudden rage.*] What did you say, Heinz?

THE CHAPLAIN

I have told you that you misunderstand our lord when you think that at this solemn hour he is in the mood for jests and quips.

ULRICH

[*Drinks and violently fights down his emotion.*] Fool! This Burgundy is three years old at the most. What is it? I was not listening. No doubt, I am a poor companion. But I would be telling a falsehood if I were to say that I desired any company, including your own. And what was the amusement to which you looked forward? Why did you drag me into this damp, dank, low-lying hole? The delights you offer me are wretched. [*He turns pale again.*] What was that?

THE CHAPLAIN

What does your highness mean?

ULRICH

Why did you all give a violent start suddenly? Why are your hands on my shoulders?

COUNT HEINZ

You are to be patient and drink and play cards with us, cousin.

ULRICH

And I would rather not drink your wine with you or play at cards.

THE MAJOR-DOMO

[*Entering from the garden whither he had gone to look.*] My lord, on the path that leads below the garden between the walls an Italian has been beating his wife. She cried out.

ULRICH

That is not true. I heard a calf cry under the butcher's knife — not a woman.

THE CHAPLAIN

There are things which one should not hear, your highness.

ULRICH

[*Almost maddened but restrained by the hands of the others.*] Then thrust a hot iron into the passages of my ears! Let me go, I tell you.

COUNT HEINZ

It is really all quiet in the garden, dear cousin.

ULRICH

All quiet?

COUNT HEINZ

So quiet that you can hear the gardener tear the ripe lemons from the trellises.

ULRICH

[*Sinks down and clasps his hands over his eyes to hide his tears.*] Look not upon me!

COUNT EBERHARD

[*Moved.*] My dear nephew, if it is really the suffering of your good wife that hurts you so — God keep us from misunderstanding our fellowmen! God protect us from dullness of soul! If then it be the suffering of the poor countess Griselda, I bid you remember that we were all born of mothers. Consider further that none of our mothers died. Neither will your wife die!

ULRICH

[*Springing up.*] Bring back the girdle with the dagger.

COUNT EBERHARD

Not now, dear nephew.

ULRICH

Do you desire me to suffocate? Do you wish the rigour of death to overtake my living body.

[*Like a maniac he is held on all sides.*] Would you have me turn blue under your eyes like a boiled fish! I am stricken with blindness! I would see the enemy and face him! For this is brute violence and the violator is there! Clown! Coward! Adulterer! Come forth! Violence against violence! Let her go! She is mine! What has she done? Let her go!

COUNT EBERHARD

My dear boy, speak and draw breath! You have stopped breathing.

[*Between weeping and laughter* THE BARONESS *comes down the stairs.*

THE BARONESS

Griselda has given birth to a beautiful, healthy boy!

THE EIGHTH SCENE

The room in the garden house. About three weeks have elapsed. GRISELDA, *as beautiful as ever, clad in the garb of a lady of the castle stands face to face with* COUNT EBERHARD *and* THE CHAPLAIN.

GRISELDA

So you received my letter and visited him?

COUNT EBERHARD

Ay. He has taken up his abode in a hunting hut which lies, almost unapproachable, upon a cliff overhanging the shore of the lake.

GRISELDA

All alone?

COUNT EBERHARD

All alone like a hermit. He has lapsed back utterly into the strange ways that were his before his marriage.

GRISELDA

Do you know why my husband does not come to me?

COUNT EBERHARD

Nay. To affirm anything would be to utter an untruth. But I would counsel you, dear lady, to

exercise a further measure of patience. To be sure, the storm in him is lasting somewhat long! But if you will fix your mind on your power over him — greater than any has exercised — and upon the fact, observed by us with emotion and almost with astonishment, that he loves you, even if not the child, with an impassioned love — if you will think of these things you will be able to continue your lenience.

THE CHAPLAIN

Will you tell us, gracious lady, upon what occasion his anger against you burst forth?

GRISELDA

It is difficult for me to do so. I do not like to speak of it. But I will conquer my repugnance. During the three weeks that I lay upon my bed my eyes did not see my husband. At times, as the baroness told me — the tiring-women bearing her out — he approached my bed when I was asleep.— Naturally, when my strength returned I missed — ah, yes,— I missed . . . my child.

COUNT EBERHARD

Do let me assure you, dearest countess, that your child is well and in the most conscientious care.

GRISELDA

I avoided asking at once for I feared the worst of all answers. Gradually I observed in all about me a curious lack of candour, so that I felt increasingly wounded and less alarmed. Nor do I know to this day the nature and cause of the meas-

ures that have been taken. I cannot explain them at all.

COUNT EBERHARD

Consider it all quite simply as a foolish whim of his.

GRISELDA

I try, but the effort is fruitless.

THE CHAPLAIN

Why can you not decide, gracious lady, to give your confidence to your confessor?

GRISELDA

I do not know. Perhaps for the first time in many days I was what my parents were wont to call stubborn of heart. It was perhaps my old, evil nature which appeared again and almost against my will sealed my lips the closer the more my heart ached. To be sure, the moment came when I was forced to speak.

COUNT EBERHARD

When was that?

GRISELDA

When he appeared again to whom alone without betraying or humiliating myself I could express my doubts and my fears.

COUNT EBERHARD

And what did your husband say in reply, dear countess?

GRISELDA

At first I could not break the silence even to him. I hesitate to say that something not unlike horror came upon me. And how could I speak at once seeing that he came to me with outstretched arms and even, I believe, enfolded me in his embrace? — I might have been content therewith. And I know that I wished to be content. But suddenly I heard, almost to my own astonishment, a hard voice ask: Where is the child?

THE CHAPLAIN

And so you asked him: Where is the child? Then . . .

GRISELDA

Ay. . . . Then he turned upon his heel and left me standing there . . . left me without a word and has not returned unto this day.

THE CHAPLAIN

Do not weep, dear lady.

GRISELDA

Am I weeping again?

COUNT EBERHARD

As far as your little boy is concerned, I desire to put your mind at ease . . .

GRISELDA

Let be! Something has come over me . . . I know not what . . . it is something that has ren-

dered me perhaps criminally indifferent to any answer of the question I asked that day. So it is, gentlemen. I cannot play a part! Tell me on what grounds the margrave bases his desertion of his wife.

COUNT EBERHARD

When I sought him out in his hut in the hills he answered me with one of his dark sayings. Whoever, he said, has been destined by fate to be alone — let him remain in his cage and set snares.

GRISELDA

[*Repeats.*] Whoever has been destined by fate to be alone . . .

COUNT EBERHARD

Thus did he speak.

GRISELDA

[*In boundless astonishment.*] Do you understand that?

THE CHAPLAIN

God in heaven is my witness that I do not.

GRISELDA

And did he give you no message . . . at all . . . for me?

COUNT EBERHARD

He only repeated that he knew and recognised the truth of his aloneness upon earth.

GRISELDA

[*Rings a little bell.*] And so you do not need to keep it a secret any longer that my letter to the margrave has not been answered.

COUNT EBERHARD

We must admit that to stay within the truth. And yet I would have you feel an assurance of an early change in his mood.

[*A* TIRING-WOMAN *enters.*

GRISELDA

Nurse, mount to the little chamber by the upper stairs. There stands an old oaken chest. You find the key thereto in my bedchamber, on the small, golden ring which you know. When you have opened the chest by means of the key, then use this second key. [*She takes another key and little chain from her bosom where it was hidden.*] And from the compartment to your right take a bundle. It is wrapped in a yellow head kerchief.

THE TIRING WOMAN

I will, my lady.

GRISELDA

Hurry, dear girl, hurry.

[THE TIRING WOMAN *hastens up the spiral stairs.*

GRISELDA

If I had children I would remain . . .

COUNT EBERHARD

What do you mean? Where are you going?

GRISELDA

But since the child was not left in my keeping, what is there to hold me here? Had my child been left me . . . But I do not know. . . . I am confused. . . . There is no clearness in me any longer; there is no certainty. . . . My hands grasp the empty air. The child of a peasant lass fills him with disgust.

THE CHAPLAIN

In that respect, gracious lady, I can assure you of the contrary.

[THE TIRING WOMAN *brings the desired bundle.*

GRISELDA

So far as I am concerned my lord has communicated his will to me in unequivocal terms. Do you know what this bundle holds? I would fare forth in my nakedness, but I did not so come hither. Thus do I still nurse the superfluous feeling of honour of the peasant. [*To* THE TIRING WOMAN.] Come! [*She takes the bundle from her.*] In this bundle, my lords, lies a coarse shift and the skirt of earthy brown in which I was clad when my lord came to the farm a-wooing me. I have prayed leaning over these garments — more than once. Now I redeem them for myself like a guarded, a heavenly treasure. I beg of you to have a little patience. I desire witnesses for my transformation.

[Griselda *and* The Tiring Woman *withdraw into an adjoining chamber.*

Count Eberhard

[*Frightened.*] What is she about to undertake, chaplain?

The Chaplain

I am afraid that her action will openly accuse the noble house of Saluzza.

Count Eberhard

If she means to leave the castle, I will never . . . never stand by and consent.

The Chaplain

[*Ironically.*] That, if it were possible, would certainly contribute to the fair fame of this family.

[Griselda *appears in her peasant garb exactly as at the beginning of the action. Her demeanour is as natural and noble as before. She seems not to mark the transformation.*

Griselda

[*Continuing in the tone of her interrupted speech.*] I may be utterly weak, my lords, and it is possible that utter weakness is the highest and nearest path to divine blessedness. But I cannot be idle if I am to suffer. Look you, I would be ashamed of my empty hands. I must work if I am to endure. There is a ring! Give it back to my dear lord.

[*She moves toward the door that leads to the garden.* COUNT EBERHARD *in extreme consternation bars her way.*

COUNT EBERHARD

Griselda, you will be recognised in the garden or in the court.

GRISELDA

[*With head thrown back.*] That time, I thank God, is past, my lord count. I need hide myself no longer.

[*She leaves the castle.*

THE NINTH SCENE

The little farmyard of HELMBRECHT. FATHER HELMBRECHT *sits and whets his scythe.* MOTHER HELMBRECHT *hurries to and fro on various light tasks. It is early of a Summer's day.*

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Heigho! A man gets old. [*He rises.*] Ten years ago I was younger than I am to-day, mother.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

The weaker the beggar the stronger the crutch.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Begging and working are two different things after all!

[*Both work on for a while in silence.*

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Tell me again of yesterday when you had speech with our daughter.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

[*Sighs.*] It is still as it was, mother, when I told you of it last night and this morning in our little room.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Do you believe it true what the farmers say, that for weeks the margravine has been alone in the castle?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Ay, mother, what they say is as true as that we are old and helpless people who have been robbed.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Have you led the calf to water?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

I tell you, mother, I would like to go — old as I am and humble a man as I am — and tell our daughter's husband the truth!

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

If only it were so easy in such matters to make another know the truth. Where did you speak to our daughter yesterday, husband?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Well, as I was telling you: I sat amid the branches of the olive-tree, as though I were picking olives . . .

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

And so you had gone into the park of the castle?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Ay, my thought was — let come what will. And so I crept into the park.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

And so it is there that you saw her?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

As clearly as I see this axe or this hoe.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Why did you not ask her what has become of the child, if you spoke to her just as we are speaking here?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

What do you think? I suppose they killed the poor little bastard.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Some people are saying one thing and some are saying another. If I had been in your place, husband, I would have asked.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

A man need not ask after what he knows. For three or four weeks they locked our lass up in the dairy with bread and water. And when she would not die, they made her go, amid the jeering of all, all but naked, into the great banqueting hall where the lord, who is now going to wed a real lady, was banqueting and drinking with his boon-companions, and forced her to go from one to the other.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Did our daughter tell you that herself?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

It was not at all as you think. I sat in the olive tree under which she passes some time during the day. Well, and so she came walking along . . . came and sat down and sat there for half an hour like a block of wood on the bench under the tree. I didn't want to scare her. And so, softly, softly, I threw down two or three green olives. She marked it and then I said: Daughter Griselda, when will you be coming home to us? And she answered: Soon! And ran away swiftly.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

What did you mean by your question, husband?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

I do not know how the words slipped out.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

And what did she mean by saying: "Soon"?

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Eh, mother, I know as little as you. I asked: When? And she said: Soon.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Ay, husband, it is an aching anxiety to have in one's soul and one scarcely knows how to stir with it.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

It were better for a lamb to go to its feeding with a wolf than for an honest peasant maid to

go to bed with a nobleman! Ay, and our household and farm are going to the bad! Mother, sit down! You are not strong enough. I'll carry the hay into the stable-rick.

[Griselda, *quite the peasant lass again, comes eagerly from the stable and says firmly and quite naturally.*

Griselda

It has been done, father.

Father Helmbrecht

[*Not trusting his eyes.*] What is that?

Mother Helmbrecht

[*Cries out.*]

Father Helmbrecht

Griselda, is that you? Whither have you come?

Griselda

From the stable. I have been milking the goat.

Mother Helmbrecht

Father, who is that? Do you see her too? Griselda, did you die in the castle and is it your ghost that is here?

Griselda

[*With harsh brevity.*] Ay, I died in the castle. And all things there have died to me. Here do I live. And all things here have come to life again.

I should never have exchanged these things for others.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Is it really and truly yourself, Griselda?

GRISELDA

Who else should it be, father? At most my hands have grown softer. But let me have enough work to do! Where is the milk-pail? Where is the blue bran trough?

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Griselda, you cannot work at these things any longer!

GRISELDA

If you cannot use me, I would have to go elsewhere in search of work.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

But where could you go? Tell us that, Griselda!

GRISELDA

Do you think that I should kill myself? The world is wide and I can work anywhere.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

But what have you done with your child?

GRISELDA

I have had no child! I desired no child! I can have as many children as I want! The men would not be far to seek.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Griselda, did his lordship drive you out of the house?

GRISELDA

Ay, mother, the margrave drove me out of the house.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

And why did he do so?

GRISELDA

Because I deserved no better, mother.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

Wherein did you deserve so badly of him? Did you enrage him by your perverse ways?

GRISELDA

On the contrary: I have deserved such misfortune because I was a wretched, patient wench! Because I was silent and did not cry out! Because I did not strike out and bite! Because I did not fly at their throats!

[*At the little gate in the fence appears* EBERHARD. *Hesitatingly he approaches. At some distance stands* THE BARONESS *in apparent indifference.*

GRISELDA

[*Violently approaching the* COUNT.] Who gave you permission to enter here? There is place enough beyond the fence.

COUNT EBERHARD

Griselda, grant me one word.

GRISELDA

I have nothing more to say to you.

COUNT EBERHARD

Countess Griselda, return with us to the castle. The carriage is behind the house on the field path.

GRISELDA

Shall I scour the stairs of the castle, my lord?

COUNT EBERHARD

Who would ever expect such a thing of you?

GRISELDA

If ever I am to return to the castle it will be upon honest feet to do honest work with my two hands.

COUNT EBERHARD

Move back into your chambers, dear lady! Come with us and have patience.

GRISELDA

Say that you would immure my living body! Say that, and I will go with you most joyfully. Otherwise never . . . never . . . be assured of that.

COUNT EBERHARD

Countess Griselda, I do not ask whether this is your real self. You cannot have so utterly for-

gotten what you owe to that station to which, for better or worse, you belong now.

GRISELDA

My station is where I plant these two feet of mine! Here I belong. It is this that I had forgotten. I had forgotten that I can cry and threaten and storm and grasp a steer by his horns! I had forgotten my true possession and lived in hypocritical weakness upon alms.

COUNT EBERHARD

[*To* MOTHER HELMBRECHT.] Speak a word to your daughter, mother!

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

[*With tears in her voice.*] What did you do to her child?

THE BARONESS

[*Across the fence.*] Not a hair of its head has been hurt.

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

I cannot tell what happened between our daughter and the margrave. It may be that she is in the wrong, and if she has been guilty of any . . .

COUNT EBERHARD

There can be no question of the margravine's being guilty of anything. Only seek to persuade her. . . . Father Helmbrecht, you as an experienced man must be reasonable!

GRISELDA

[*Lifts a stone as* COUNT EBERHARD *moves forward.*] Father . . . mother! I'll . . . These people are not to come a step further into the yard.

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Eh, there, lass, are you frenzied?

THE BARONESS

I am indeed surprised that the Countess Griselda has so soon lost all sense of her station, of her dignity and of what she owes herself. What terrible thing has happened, after all? A nobleman will be a nobleman. We must reckon with the fact that he will not renounce his inborn and imperious will for the sake of any adventure however serious its consequences may have become.

GRISELDA

You may speak. There is wax in my ears.

COUNT EBERHARD

So you will not return to the castle with us upon any terms?

GRISELDA

Unless you summon me thither to scour the stairs.

COUNT EBERHARD

What puts that thought into your mind, Griselda?

THE BARONESS

Come, count! I fear that at this moment your efforts will be of no avail. Assuredly it is a

source of increasing astonishment that two natures like hers and the margrave's, so akin to one another in their madness, should ever have fallen out! One is tempted to say: Be united! You are really dependent upon each other.

COUNT EBERHARD

Griselda, you will go with us now.

GRISELDA

Bring me a command from my lord and I will come and wash the stairs. That is my duty and does not dishonour me.

COUNT EBERHARD

What does dishonour you, Griselda?

GRISELDA

Your alms!

COUNT EBERHARD

Griselda, it cannot be spared you. Either you determine now, for your own good, to do right and voluntarily to return with us to the castle, or else . . .

GRISELDA

Or . . .?

COUNT EBERHARD

[*Approaches her with determination.*] Or else I shall take you there against your own will and any will that opposes me . . .

MOTHER HELMBRECHT

[*To old* HELMBRECHT *who has picked up a mattock.*] Father, father, you are not to mingle!

FATHER HELMBRECHT

Then leave her in peace, my lord. She is and was a peasant lass and what she was, let her remain.

COUNT EBERHARD

Once more: Or I will take you home by force.

THE BARONESS

Griselda, you have outgrown this corner; come with us!

GRISELDA

Force?

[*Unexpectedly she grasps the* COUNT, *lifts him and puts him down outside of the fence. She locks the gate.*

GRISELDA

[*Wildly, half in triumph and half in tears.*] Thus! Speak to me again of force and I will think of it seriously.

THE TENTH SCENE

The hall in the castle of the margrave. In the middle the stairs leading upward. To the left the great entrance door, to the right a glass door leading out into the park. It is before six o'clock in the morning. COUNT EBERHARD *enters through the great entrance door.*

THE WARDER *of the castle comes to meet him.*

COUNT EBERHARD

I must speak to the chaplain.

THE WARDER

His reverence had a long conversation until late into the night with his highness. Perhaps on that account his reverence is still abed.

COUNT EBERHARD

Did the margrave return at last?

THE WARDER

At midnight, yesterday or to-day, however you choose to put it, our lord arrived. The bell sounded at midnight. I peered through the port hole before I opened. I am sorry that I did not recognise our lord at once.

COUNT EBERHARD

At all events he is at home. That serves to calm me somewhat.

THE WARDER

Scarcely had his highness arrived when five or six mounted messengers had to be in readiness. And when the council with his reverence was over the men were given their orders and rode away in all directions through the night, which, fortunately, was moonlit.

COUNT EBERHARD

One of these rascals came to me too and waked me from my sleep, God knows to what end. For I cannot but think that his message would have served all purposes equally well this morning.

[THE CHAPLAIN *appears.*

THE CHAPLAIN

There you are, count!

COUNT EBERHARD

[*Turning from* THE WARDER *who withdraws into his lodge.*] Ay, here I am. Tell me now, if you please, why I had to arise so early.

THE CHAPLAIN

The margrave has returned to the castle.

COUNT EBERHARD

The warder just confided that fact to me. Well, I suppose that little Ulricus Franciscus Heliodor

is just being packed up at home under the supervision of my wife with all his attendants and put into the carriage. But even granting the necessity for all this, why could it not be done by the light of day?

THE CHAPLAIN

The margrave came home last night in a thoroughly crushed state of soul. You can readily believe me that it was no easy matter for me to calm him when he heard that our margravine had left the house. First he grew white as the wall of the room in which he stood. Then he began to rage wildly. Finally he delivered one after another a series of over-hasty commands. The last of these which summoned you hither and commanded that his little heir be brought is probably the most beneficent of all. For in his first wild eagerness he sent a stern command to his wife to appear here at once. It was an order fortified with threats which, to my horror, he sent by the hand of his overseer.

COUNT EBERHARD

If that is so she will at least come.

THE CHAPLAIN

I sought at first to dissuade him. Happily I remembered your experience in your attempt to cause the countess to return to her duty. And now I see the kindness of Providence manifested in the fact that his highness in his rash blindness has hit upon the one means by which, according to you, the margravine can be wrought upon to return to the house of her husband. For now, diffi-

cult as a reconciliation will be, there is at least some hope of it.

COUNT EBERHARD

I hope you do not imagine the reconciliation easy of accomplishment.

THE CHAPLAIN

Nay. On the one hand a peaceful settlement seems to me almost impossible in the light of what has happened and of what I experienced this past night; on the other hand I am somewhat encouraged by the surprising fact that in the face of inconsiderable opposition I was able to effect the return of the child.

COUNT EBERHARD

I am surprised that my nephew really made use of this final weapon against Griselda and did not consider it beneath his dignity.

[ULRICH *enters from the garden. He is deeply troubled.*

THE CHAPLAIN

He is no longer conscious of the quality of his actions.

ULRICH

If you are in secret session, let me not disturb you.

COUNT EBERHARD

God forbid, dear nephew! You commanded my presence! Here I am.

ULRICH

Oh, I would insist on a threefold command and yet not follow it, if it came from a man whose wife had run away from him.

COUNT EBERHARD

[*With a convulsive attempt at merriment.*] Why, did your wife run away from you?

ULRICH

Like a mere hireling, her wages in her hand. Let be! The matter admits of no palliation; it is scarcely conducive to a heightened feeling of honour.

COUNT EBERHARD

My dear boy, may one, with all possible humility, tell you the truth?

ULRICH

When did I ever take delight in lies?

COUNT EBERHARD

Then you must know that you have no right to be surprised.

ULRICH

Oh, ay!! No doubt! I know! I am an ogre, a Herod! I won my spurs at the slaughter of the innocents! It is you who are blind in your folly — you who are mad, not I! Very well! Paint me a devil, an evil fiend, an ogre, a creature to make children scream! Have pictures made of me with glowing eyes and foam-flecked tusks and

sharks' teeth! And forget not to add the claws of the tiger! How am I to prevent you? I will fasten a whole gallery of these pictures to the walls of my hunting-lodge and laugh at them from the bottom of my heart.

COUNT EBERHARD

On several occasions, dear Ulrich, I have publicly defended the opinion that you are not at all the wild individual that you pretend to be. At the same time, you did rob a mother of her child. And then, at a harmless word of hers, you abandoned her.

ULRICH

A harmless word? How? What is a wild mother-animal to me? Do you know what I have endured for weeks? In quivering fear for her life I have driven myself and my glow and mad passion, so ridiculously rewarded, like a dog with blows and kicks back to kennel. I have controlled myself with superhuman power only to see this idol, this goddess, this golden torment again issue forth from her chamber whole and unharmed in freshness and in strength. She came . . . oh, I dare not think of it.

THE CHAPLAIN

But so far as I have heard she only asked you, with all possible gentleness, after the whereabouts of her child.

ULRICH

But I asked after her . . . her only! I cared neither for man nor God besides! But what is the

profit of speaking to sticks and stones in the form of men!

COUNT EBERHARD

I rejoice to see you adventuring once more upon your accustomed path of a fresh and rustic humour.

ULRICH

I have adventured upon an abyss.

COUNT EBERHARD

When husbands and wives fall out, it behooves one to be careful of judging. It is clear however that she, the object of your anger, is nowise ignoble. On the contrary I have but recently — despite some scratches and blue bruises — learned to recognise anew the wise and authentic instinct of your choice.

ULRICH

Think ye she is to beat me daily? Ah, if there had remained in her but a drop of that pure, unsullied spring of vitality from which I have taken such deep draughts . . . she would have sought me out wherever I was and we would have found each other again! But she remained dead to me and did not awaken. Enough! This last unequivocal insult has eradicated and burned clean the dregs of my weakness! I am free! What remains is the affair of my notaries and of my envoy to the Bishop of Rome.

COUNT EBERHARD

Before you proceed to extreme measures, you will take council with many wise men.

ULRICH

First let her come and kiss my feet. Then let her, in God's name, to the end of her life herd goats and milk cows.

THE CHAPLAIN

You will not act with such harshness. She has given birth to the heir of your name and your possessions. And I know of a surety: You love your wife!

ULRICH

What an extraordinarily clever person you are, chaplain! Give her the child! I do not want to see her! Let her take the child and go where she would!

COUNT EBERHARD

Dear lord and friend, bethink yourself! Do not deny the purpose and value of your being, the strength of your ancestors! You are no baker or cobbler; you do not live from hand to mouth, without future or past, selfishly, and nursing merely the brief importance of your day! Look at the boy, at least! He can almost call you by name!

ULRICH

[*With suspicious violence.*] Let me be! Don't approach me with the accursed brat!

[*He hastens up the stairs.* COUNT EBERHARD *and the* CHAPLAIN *exchange significant glances.*

COUNT EBERHARD

"First let her come and kiss my feet!" I fear we will not live to see that, chaplain! He is still far from any realisation of what, under his curious treatment, his wife has become again.

[*Six scrub women, maidens and older women of the peasantry, with gay head kerchiefs, each carrying a pail, a brush and a clout, come chattering from the garden, fill the hall and begin to scour the floor. The* FIRST SCRUBWOMAN *kneels on the tiles of the halls, the* SECOND *on the stairs. The others consult concerning the distribution of the work.*

FIRST SCRUBWOMAN

[*To her who kneels at work on the stairs.*] Hurry and take yourself to the upper hall. You might wait until your work is assigned.

SECOND SCRUBWOMAN

[*It is* GRISELDA, *who, well disguised by her head kerchief, kneels on the stairs.*] Accursed crow! Will you go your way? Will you not leave me in peace? There! [*She lashes the clout about the other's ears.*] To your own work! And if you make more noise the wooden pail will follow!

THE WARDER

[*To* GRISELDA.] Silence, woman! You are in the castle and not in a stable!

COUNT EBERHARD

Warder!

THE WARDER

My lord?

COUNT EBERHARD

We would be alone. Withdraw to your lodge.

THE WARDER

Ay, my lord.

[*He withdraws through the main entrance.*]

COUNT EBERHARD

What do you say to that voice, Chaplain, if one may ask?

THE CHAPLAIN

Which one?

COUNT EBERHARD

Have you not just heard the maid servant on the stairs speak.

THE CHAPLAIN

Ay, I heard her speak, unhappily.

COUNT EBERHARD

Then assume, until we know more, that the servant kneeling on the stairs is Griselda.

THE CHAPLAIN

I would recognise the countess Griselda at a glance and in any disguise.

COUNT EBERHARD

[*Approaching* GRISELDA.] You vigorous maiden, what is your name?

GRISELDA

[*Harshly and without looking up.*] My name is still Griselda.

COUNT EBERHARD

[*Half turning to* THE CHAPLAIN.] The gracious mistress of this house was wont to bear that name.

GRISELDA

Oh, there live many by that name.

COUNT EBERHARD

[*Within* GRISELDA'S *hearing.*] Can you fail to recognise the sound of that unforgettable voice, chaplain?

THE CHAPLAIN

Nay, but it seems to me as though the steps beneath and the walls about me were swaying! [*He approaches* GRISELDA *with determination.*] Illustrious countess, do not refuse your obedience to me at this moment. Arise and proceed to your chambers! Everything is prepared for your reception!

GRISELDA

What would you? I have my work! Do not disturb me!

THE CHAPLAIN

Countess Griselda, it is your duty as a woman to be inclined to reconciliation. Nor should you harden your heart. Do you not know that the hand that strikes is the hand that is stricken of

God? Since midnight the margrave Ulrich, your husband, has been in the castle and who regards him closely will perhaps form the opinion that he has returned not utterly in the guise of one who triumphs. Meet him half way. Countess, are you silent?

GRISELDA

[*With hard tones.*] I do not understand you.

THE CHAPLAIN

It is not right that in these momentous hours you oppose my better insight. In some way you must both have erred, and the understanding of that must come to both of you. Be assured of the certainty I have gained that the heart of your husband is still . . .

COUNT EBERHARD

And will you not, good maiden, be less zealous in your scouring of the stairs? Are not the words of the good chaplain worthy of some respect?

GRISELDA

It behooves me to be careless of anything rather than of this task.

COUNT EBERHARD

Is that true? And what purpose do you gain by lying here on your knees and doing menial work with a kind of rage while such important issues are at stake?

GRISELDA

Wait a little and I will tell you why I wash these stairs so zealously. I seek to wash away my own shame and the shame of this house.

COUNT EBERHARD

I see but one matter for shame, and it is that you are lying here like a servant.

GRISELDA

That does not shame me, for I am washing, washing from these steps the prints of my feet. And though I were stricken with blindness and lost my hands — still without sight or touch my spirit would wash these steps to the end.

COUNT EBERHARD

But what is the meaning of that double shame you speak of?

GRISELDA

These stairs were shamed through me and I through them. I should have throttled your master and not have followed him.

THE CHAPLAIN

You too, my lady countess, have, I observe, a demon in your soul which should be conquered.

GRISELDA

Do not give yourself up to the hope that anything within me can still be conquered.

THE CHAPLAIN

'Tis well. Then let me attend to all things and proceed to your chambers.

GRISELDA

Would you couple the margrave Ulrich with a serving maid?

THE CHAPLAIN

He is to receive his spouse again.

GRISELDA

Are these stairs, my lords, which I have just cleansed in the sweat of my brow, to grow unclean again at once?

THE CHAPLAIN

We beseech you, countess, not to be hard, stubborn and averse to reconciliation. We beseech it for the sake of this house.

GRISELDA

If ever again, which God forbid, I were to meet your master face to face, what think ye would be my first question? Robber, robber, where is my child? He has trodden me underfoot through my child.

[*The old* COUNTESS EBERHARD *enters by the main entrance.*

COUNTESS EBERHARD

What is the meaning of these eccentric actions? We are scarcely given time to wash the sleep from

our eyes, we are roused an hour after midnight, yet no preparation is made for our reception! Warder! Ho, warder! Ah, there you are at least, dear Eberhard! What is happening? Why are we called forth in the middle of the night?

COUNT EBERHARD

Dear one, you must ask the chaplain. I am luckily not concerned in the plotting this time.

COUNTESS EBERHARD

Where are the servants?

[THE WARDER *appears.*

THE WARDER

At the advice of the chaplain I have withdrawn the servants for the present.

COUNTESS EBERHARD

Then I must request one of you to come and assist the nurse and child to alight from the carriage.

[*The nurse enters carrying the little prince* ULRICUS FRANCISCUS HELIODOR, *upon a pillow.*

COUNTESS EBERHARD

Oh, you most wretched creature, did I not bid you stay in the carriage and wait for help? In our hurry and scurry in the dark she sprained her foot. Go and assist her, Eberhard. What is the reason, dear chaplain, why this little prince must hold his

entry here before daybreak? Tell me why such haste was necessary?

THE CHAPLAIN

The temperament of your nephew forces us all to act in the same tempo.

COUNTESS EBERHARD

Has madness driven us all to commit follies! Here you have one lying on a pillow who is by far the most sensible of us all. He lies still and sleeps peacefully.

COUNT EBERHARD

Truly, he sleeps as quietly as a marmot in the foreboding sultriness of the morning.

COUNTESS EBERHARD

Forward then, nurse! Try to ascend the stairs with your sprained foot! What, are you going to fall?

THE MAJOR-DOMO

The rooms on the first floor that look out over the lake are in readiness.

COUNTESS EBERHARD

Not over the laundry, let us hope. Hold her! Nurse, what is the matter?

THE NURSE

[*Who has ascended about four steps, leans against the balustrade to rest.*] Only one little

minute. It is nothing. Only a sharp pain in my left foot.

COUNTESS EBERHARD

Oh, but we must get upstairs, nurse!

THE MAJOR-DOMO

Sit down and hold the child.

COUNTESS EBERHARD

What is this? She is slipping back! The woman cannot mount the stairs.

THE CHAPLAIN

[*Making the sign of the cross.*] May God bless your entering here, princely child.

COUNTESS EBERHARD

And may He also provide strong arms and legs so long as the child cannot run about! Wench, come hither! Do you understand? There, nurse, let her carry the child up!

[GRISELDA, *still in her head kerchief, descends the stairs falteringly. The child is placed in her arms. She gazes at it dumbly.*

THE MAJOR-DOMO

But do not forget that you are carrying the hereditary prince and not a wooden pail. Ascend the stairs carefully!

[GRISELDA *mounts two stairs, then falters. She mounts a few more and then is forced to stop and rest. She lashes her-*

self forward but, after standing erect and trembling for a second, sinks down with a moan.

COUNTESS EBERHARD

What is it? Can these women no longer carry a child of two months up a comfortable flight of stairs? Is this wench crazy? Hold the child, for the love of heaven!

[*The* COUNTESS EBERHARD *has approached hurriedly and has taken the child from* GRISELDA *who breaks down with a loud cry. Almost at the same moment* ULRICH *appears at the head of the stairs.*

ULRICH

Griselda! Griselda! Here am I! Did you call?

[*He hastens down and takes* GRISELDA *in his arms. The two find each other in a long impassioned kiss. The nurse and the* COUNTESS EBERHARD *carry the child up the stairs and disappear.* ULRICH *and* GRISELDA *seem to forget all about them. This induces* COUNT EBERHARD *and* THE CHAPLAIN *to withdraw with signs of deep emotion.* ULRICH *and* GRISELDA *remain alone. With infinite tenderness* ULRICH *leads* GRISELDA, *who has laid her arm about his neck, down the stairs.*

ULRICH

[*Breathlessly.*] We will invest Francis Heliodor with the lordship by the lake . . .

GRISELDA

Kiss me!

ULRICH

And we will give the farm Schoenbuche to your parents . . .

GRISELDA

Kiss me!

ULRICH

Why have I inflicted these sufferings upon you? I cannot tell.

GRISELDA

Do not leave me again forever, beloved.

ULRICH

Do not turn back your lovely head so anxiously after our child . . . I love, I love our child . . . Look elsewhither! Do not look behind you like a poor, robbed animal on a meadow. For now . . . it seems to me as though I had awakened. And as though I had escaped thither where you have always been! As though I were admitted to your sanctuary. No one shall ever touch your child again!

ULRICH

And I see clearly now, Ulrich, why you left me that day.

ULRICH

I do not understand it! I cannot grasp it! What curse was laid upon me, Griselda, that forced me who love you with so extreme a love to torment

you with all the malevolence in my heart? Curse me! Drive me forth into the world an outlaw!

GRISELDA

Do you think that I have never both loved and tormented you?

ULRICH

Nay! Griselda, I have heard the cry of your heart! Ah, had I heard it sooner! Who am I that I should rebel against this imperious cry which makes us both to tremble in our weakness? Tell me, how shall I expiate my sin?

GRISELDA

You must love me less, my beloved!

GABRIEL SCHILLING'S FLIGHT

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

GABRIEL SCHILLING, *painter.*
EVELYN, *his wife.*
PROFESSOR MÄURER, *sculptor and etcher.*
LUCY HEIL, *violinist.*
HANNA ELIAS
MISS MAJAKIN
DR. RASMUSSEN
KLAS OLFERS, *innkeeper*
KÜHN, *carpenter.*
AN APPRENTICE.
SCHUCKERT, MATHEW } *fishermen.*
A MAID IN OLFER'S INN.
FISHERMEN AND THEIR WIVES AND CHILDREN.

The scene is an island of the Baltic sea.

Time: 1900.

"Some men . . . assert that they met Eunosthus hastening to the sea in order to bathe, because a woman had entered his sanctuary."

PLUTARCH. *The Moral Writings.*

THE FIRST ACT

The shore of the island. It is a clear August day; the sea, in the background, gleams in the light of the late afternoon. To the right is the shed of a life-saving station to the wall of which has been fastened the figurehead of a wreck. The figurehead is of painted wood and represents a woman with wind-blown garments, her head is thrown back so that she seems to oppose her pale face with its somnambulistic stare to the winds of heaven. Her long, black hair flows loosely over her shoulders.— Drawn up on the shore lies a fishing smack. In the foreground, on the dune, to the left, opposite the shed, is a signal pole with rope-ladders, etc.

On the flat dune, between the pole and the shed, a young girl, Lucy Heil, *dressed in a gown of thin, white stuff, is lying with a book. From the right comes the carpenter* Kühn, *a man of about forty-five, followed by* An Apprentice. *Both men wear blue aprons; neither of them a head covering.* Kühn *salutes* Lucy, *the boy contents himself with a grin. Behind the shed lies a pile of fir lumber.* Kühn *gives the apprentice two boards and the latter carries them away.*

Kühn

Well, you're here again too, Miss?

LUCY

That is as it should be.

KÜHN

You always come when the birds migrate. When they rest here on their way south, you come, too.

LUCY

That's true.

KÜHN

We're always expecting to see Professor Mäurer build himself a place on the island yet.

LUCY

He came near doing it last autumn. But Windmüller suddenly raised his price too high.

KÜHN

People are so stupid. They don't know what they're losing. If a man like Professor Mäurer were to build himself a summer home here that would be of great advantage to every one.

LUCY

Oh, it wouldn't be well for the island to become better known. All the hurried crowds of the great cities would pour themselves out over it, and then its beauty would be at an end.

KÜHN

Is the professor your uncle, Miss?

LUCY

[*Laughing.*] No, I'm his grandmother, Mr. Kühn.

[OTTFRIED MÄURER *comes across the dunes from the sea. He is a man of medium height, about thirty-seven years old, blond and with a reddish blond Vandyck beard. His close-cropped hair shows the roundness of his skull. The keen seriousness of his expression — he wears gold-rimmed spectacles — is broken at times by a gleam of arch humour. He is unobtrusively dressed; he has an overcoat thrown over his shoulders and wears a soft felt hat. An ordinary cane hangs from his arm and in his hand he holds a quarto volume bound in white pigskin.*

MÄURER

Good day, Mr. Kühn.

KÜHN

Good day, Professor. So you've arrived safe on our island again.

MÄURER

Thank God, yes.— I needed it like everything this time!

KÜHN

Well, yes, we read about it in the papers.

MÄURER

[*Smiling.*] What is it you read in the papers?

KÜHN

Why, about the fine monument that they erected in Bremen.

MÄURER

It cost me a damnable lot of work, that monument, you can believe me. I'm glad it's out of my way.

KÜHN

But now you're going right off to Greece again?

MÄURER

Did you happen to read that in the papers too?

KÜHN

Yes, sir, it said that there are marble quarries out there and you were going to pick out blocks for new monuments.

MÄURER

Well, thank heaven, for the present I happen to be here! More than once I have been sitting quite comfortably in a wine house in Berlin and have read in a newspaper that I was, that very moment, in Constantinople modelling the Sultan's daughter.— By the way, does that figurehead belong to anybody?

KÜHN

The great nor'wester of two years ago washed it up on the beach.

MÄURER

I like it; I'd like to buy it.

KÜHN

"What to do with that shrew? Her the cook came and took!" Schuckert I believe found her.

MÄURER

Is that young Schuckert?

KÜHN

Yes. Those people always find something. The old man once pulled a thick, gold bracelet out of the water. D'you want me to talk to him?

MÄURER

If you don't mind. I'd be glad.

KÜHN

By the way, it occurs to me, it's a mighty curious thing about that figurehead. The Danish brig that it probably belonged to and that was wrecked out here — well, two or three days before, that young Schuckert saw it, in the finest weather, as in a vision out here.

MÄURER

Do you know exactly what he means, Lucy?

LUCY

No.

MÄURER

In Scotland they call it second sight.

LUCY

Ah, yes, to see something with another than the ordinary vision.

MÄURER

Yes, as for instance one's own funeral.

KÜHN

I'm not afflicted with it, thank God, although I'm handling coffin-boards every minute.

MÄURER

Why, has any one died?

KÜHN

Not just at present. But one must keep supplied. [*He shoulders two boards and goes.*] Good-bye, professor.

MÄURER

Good-bye, Kühn.

[LUCY *and* MÄURER *are left alone.*

MÄURER

Well, little girl, I'm exceedingly surprised to see you here.

LUCY

And so am I to see you. I thought you had gone to the South Point and so I strolled toward the north. It wasn't in the least my intention to lie in wait for you.

MÄURER

[*With smiling insight and staccato utterance.*] Ah, yes! Really? Well, well! You model child! By the way, you appeared to me in a vision, too, for

I was just about to look out for you across the meadow.— What are you reading?

LUCY

Guess!

MÄURER

It's not hard to guess. You're reading Anette von Droste's poems.— How long have you been lying here, little girl?

LUCY

Oh, a long time.— Doesn't it strike you that that figurehead resembles some one?

MÄURER

[*Gazing at the figure.*] I don't know. Your mother, perhaps?

LUCY

Surely, my mother.

MÄURER

I don't see the resemblance.

LUCY

It might not have occurred to me to see it either. But I had a dream about mother. I took a walk with her at night on the beach and she had her hand with the bare lower arm on her chain and a wreath on her head just like this wooden image. And so, I suppose, quite involuntarily the two pictures were blended in my mind.— Strangely enough I dream horribly vivid dreams here and all day long

my head is feverish and the spectres of night pursue me.

MÄURER

[*Smiling, yet with a certain elevation of mood.*] But in all other respects it is as divine here as ever. I have again experienced incomparable hours. What clarity! What silent and mighty oceans of light! And liberty and the chance of wandering over this pathless tract of grass. And the taste of the salt sea on one's lips. Above all, the thunder of the sea, potent to move one even to tears. Look, a drop is still clinging to my glasses. The full, the radiant maestoso of the roll of the surges. Ah, it's wonderful!

LUCY

I suppose you've had some splendid ideas again. [*She takes his sketch-book.*]

MÄURER

Nothing. Not a line, on my honour. But give me the tablet; I must write down: It may be old-fashioned, but my own efforts are powerless in the face of so much grandeur.— By the way, didn't you have that letter of Schilling's?

LUCY

I gave it back to you this morning.

MÄURER

[*Looks in his pockets and finds the letter.*] You're right. There it is! It and my telegram must have crossed. I'd be very glad to see Schil-

ling show energy enough to tear himself away from all his misery once! D'you think it possible in the light of this letter? You're usually very clever about such things, little girl.

LUCY

[*Shrugging her shoulders.*] In the light of this letter merely I should say yes. But in Schilling's particular case one can't foretell with certainty. He seems to have reached a crisis; but you must admit that his affair with Hanna Elias has gone through crises before; and to your disgust and mine an adjustment took place in each instance. You know the means she employs. If she's determined not to let him go, she'll simply go to bed and have the nosebleed for a month!

MÄURER

Ah, she's detestable! I'm not a woman hater in any respect, am I? Nor, to please me, need they always be blonde and German. But this woman drives me wild. When I look at her corpse-like pallor I don't understand how she can stay alive, and I nurse the hope that she's bound to relieve us of herself! Not a bit! She lives on; she doesn't think of anything else. She'll end by burying us all.

LUCY

Yes, Ottfried, that's quite possible.

MÄURER

God forgive me, but if there's no speedy prospect of her leaving this vale of tears, it's all the

more reason why something drastic has to be done for Schilling — a last, if need be a brutal attempt to save him be made. He's too good to go to the devil on account of this — female!

LUCY

Perhaps your telegram inviting him came just at the right hour.

MÄURER

It's strange how this quiet, unsophisticated soul who seemed more confirmed in his calm course than any of us has been torn from his moorings by this woman. I had a very different opinion at first. His marriage with Evelyn was a bad joke. He's always quite oblivious of the external and practical, if you just let him paint, and so she — simply annexed him. Suddenly he had to support her. Hanna has more charm, more independence of spirit and I really thought at first she'd mean a rebirth of his art between thirty and forty. Instead of that she threatens his very life both as an artist and as a human being.

LUCY

Which goes to show that she is also of Oriental sloth, and that women who have nothing to do make mischief. I've made up my mind, therefore, to work as hard as possible at my fiddle this winter.

MÄURER

Have you seen the thousands and thousands of starlings and swallows on the straw-roofs of the fisher huts over in Vitte? Did you note their ex-

citement, their zest, their charming adventurousness? Doesn't that communicate the fever of travel to you?

Lucy

If I can be by the sea-shore, alone with you, in some quiet place, undisturbed, you know that I'm quite criminally content and desireless.— Do you know, by the way, what the fisherman asked me?

Mäurer

Well, what?

Lucy

Oh, never mind, nothing! Only whether you're my uncle. I told him I'm your grandmother.

Mäurer

People have the curiosity of devils! But don't let it annoy you, little girl. The way to make gossip harmless is to treat it with contempt. Listen to what I've determined on. I don't feel quite clear in my conscience about Schilling. Moral judgments are, of course, only ways of avoiding thought and understanding. Unfortunately I was guilty of passing such a judgment on my friend when I no longer understood his way of acting. Well, if it's possible, I'd like to equalise things again. Of course, that may be self-deception. It may be that I merely happen to be in a pleasant mood and desire to heighten my sense of well-being.

Lucy

Oh, you're not such a very, very wicked man!

MÄURER

Not much more wicked, at all events, than others. The sum of money under the mainmast which should properly be there — not only according to the fisherman's superstition — *that,* unhappily, was always lacking to Schilling. Doubtless he would have sailed more calmly for it. And in money matters, when there's need, one isn't always, alas, inclined to practice the highest decency. But those people in Bremen weren't stingy; I'll make up for it all now. You must both come with me to Greece.

LUCY

[*Merrily.*] Magnificent! Why your spectacles are fairly sparkling as you say that. And your hair already has the appearance of a flame upon some Delphic altar stone.

MÄURER

Very well, then I'll assume my prophetic function at once: I swear to you that Schilling will come.

LUCY

And I believe it too. And I'm confirmed in my belief by visions of him on the footpath across the moorland.

MÄURER

[*Gazes into the distance.*] Why, look, a man is running across the moorland now!

LUCY

Less than ten minutes ago the little steamer from Stralsund stopped at Grobe.— There he is!

MÄURER

He's running like a madman. That may well be the painter Schilling with his knapsack and his box of watercolours. [*He calls.*] Coo-ee!

LUCY

I'd better leave you two alone at first.

MÄURER

[*Gazes into the distance, waves his kandkerchief and cries.*] Coo-ee! Coo-ee!

LUCY

[*Starting away.*] What kind of a cry is that?

MÄURER

Coo-ee? That's the call used in the Australian bush!

LUCY

He's standing still now. [*She runs on.*] Good-bye!

MÄURER

Good-bye, my dear, good-bye! I'll make short work of it all. If it isn't he, I'll hurry and follow you.

MÄURER

[*Runs across the shore and disappears to the right.*

LUCY

[*Follows him with her eyes across the dunes. Suddenly she runs forward, nimbly climbs up the*

rope-ladder on the signal pole, waves her handkerchief and cries.] Coo-ee! Coo-ee! You'll find me at Klas Olfers' inn.

[*From behind the shed emerges once more the carpenter* Kühn.

Kühn

Some new visitor coming?

Lucy

A whole choral society to serenade Professor Mäurer.

[*She jumps down and runs away. From the left come a number of fishermen across the dunes in blue jackets and rolled-up trousers. Young* Schuckert *is among them. They are, for the most part, tall, broad-shouldered, blond men with short beards. Several carry their tall boots in their hands. There is something silent and visionary in their demeanour.*

Kühn

Schuckert!

Schuckert

What is it?

Kühn

[*Has shouldered a board.*] Help me pick up another board!

Schuckert

[*Comes over to him.*] Hurry up then!

KÜHN

D'you want to sell that there thing?

SCHUCKERT

What thing?

KÜHN

That woman without feet.

SCHUCKERT

Ha, ha, ha! What's wrong inside o' your old head that you want to bargain for that bit o' misery?

KÜHN

Who says I want to bargain for it? It's that strange professor who wants it.

SCHUCKERT

The stranger who's living at Klas Olfers? Ha, ha, ha! Well, why not? Maybe we might agree. — Good-bye, Kühn.

[*He continues his way across the dunes after he has helped the carpenter shoulder two more boards.*

KÜHN

You must carry the figure to the inn, d'you hear?

SCHUCKERT

Ay, ay!

KÜHN

The strange professor will pay you a good price, I tell you.

SCHUCKERT

They say he's a bit wobbly up here.

[*He taps his forehead with his finger.*

[SCHUCKERT *follows the other fishermen. Down by the shore he helps them push off a sailing boat through the shallow water into the sea.* KÜHN *adjusts the boards on his shoulder. As he does so, one slips down again. Immediately thereupon appear* MÄURER *and his friend* SCHILLING. *The latter is a tall, blond, beardless man; he looks more like an intellectual Swede than like a German. His clothes hang loose about his thin but graceful limbs. His eyes are large and deep-set, his cheeks are hollow. Thus he presents an appearance of physical breakdown. He has on a straw hat, a light overcoat and carries his box of colours.*

SCHILLING

Hold on there! Stand still, man! [*He stumbles up, lets his box fall, and grasps the lost board by one end with both hands.*] Come, lift the other end, Ottfried.

KÜHN

You're very good! I'm much obliged to you, gentlemen.

MÄURER

[*Hastens forward, takes the other end of the board and he and* SCHILLING *begin to swing it up and down.*] Here we are, three merry Berliners

blown by chance upon some undiscovered, lonely island.

SCHILLING

[*Swinging the board.*] "Berlin, Berlin, I'm sorry for you."

[*They place the board on the carpenter's shoulder.*

MÄURER

Kühn is a genuine Berliner, you know, old man!

KÜHN

Well, I tell you, it's my profession, of course! But I take great pleasure in making coffins. I like coffins, in fact, all excepting my own. And when I was a carpenter in Berlin near the Silesian station — well, a certain stranger with rickety legs joked with me about getting ready pretty soon to make my own coffin! Well, I thought to myself, I'd better get out of this! And I did. Yes, sir, all the doctors had given me up. And here I got right as a top again!

[*He nods and goes off with the boards on his shoulders.*

SCHILLING

[*Is a bit startled and looks alternately at his hands which are sticky with resin and after the departing carpenter.*] Queer how differently a voice like that sounds out here, and how differently an insignificant fellow like that looks here! And how the very feeling of the board is different!

[*He pulls himself together and picks up his box of paints.*

MÄURER

Man, it was the cleverest idea you've had in years to come out here!

SCHILLING

[*Laconically and in an estranged way.*] Oh, I managed.

MÄURER

Very well, and it was necessary, too. Why, it was enough to make one tear one's hair out. One couldn't get hold of you any more! How do you feel?

SCHILLING

First rate, as you see!

MÄURER

You really do look very well. A little peaked, of course, but that's merely the city life. But when you came along here with such youthful steps you looked like a man in the twenties.

SCHILLING

Result of a well-regulated life! Take your sleep! Don't drink heavy wines. Take an example by me, if you can; your nose has a suspicious glow!

MÄURER

[*Touches his nose.*] Right you are! But tell me, old fellow, what is a man to do? If you work like a stone mason you can't get along without some spirituous drink. Have you given up drinking?

SCHILLING

I wouldn't go so far as to assert that, Ottfried.

MÄURER

Well, now, open your eyes! What d'you think of this anyhow? Isn't a view like this worth the eight hours on the local trains, old boy?

[*They lose themselves in the vision of the sea, in the sound of its great monotone, in the glow of the crimson sunset sky.*

SCHILLING

[*Whose eyes grow moist.*] It's the damndest thing the way we fellows are nervous. A sudden powerful impression like this brings it out.

MÄURER

Lucy and I felt just so, Schilling. When suddenly the long lines of whitecaps arose — we walked westward from the ferry — it overwhelmed us pretty thoroughly too. I don't know why, but I believe we both cried like children. I suppose you know, too, that Lucy's mother died in the spring.

SCHILLING

[*With a strange nervousness.*] Is that so? She died, eh? What of?

MÄURER

Didn't Rasmussen tell you about it?

SCHILLING

I haven't seen Rasmussen for — oh — a year and a half.

MÄURER

He treated Mrs. Heil during her last illness.

SCHILLING

[*After a long silence.*] You know how it is with a man like Rasmussen — stubborn, his outlook entirely limited by his profession. He has no comprehension of the needs of a fellow like me. *I* hate all philistines with their moral prating; *he* actually hates art. Science! Science! That's all. And in its name — any nonsense will serve. As for his taste — savage! I had to get clear of him.

MÄURER

Ah, don't try to run down Rasmussen. A man — well, in a word, above all jesting! He's solid! On whatever side you come in contact with him, you find the real thing!

SCHILLING

Tell me, what did Mrs. Heil die of?

MÄURER

Seems to have been heart trouble.

SCHILLING

[*Taking a deep breath.*] No wonder, when you consider the miasmic atmosphere in which people

in a great city are imprisoned for life. Life has come to mean to them excitement, and of this constant overstimulation they naturally die in crowds before their time.— Ah, but you can't imagine, Ottfried, how I panted after the view here this time.

MÄURER

Why can't I? I felt exactly as you do.

SCHILLING

Impossible! In the midst of the very noise and asphalt stench of the Berlin streets I actually came to see the ocean in vision. I could have stretched out my hand after it. I'm like a seal! I'd like to plunge into the surf this minute.

MÄURER

That's, after all, not so queer either. You ought to hear Lucy talk. She's almost a fanatic of the sea and dangerously rash.

SCHILLING

That's different, too. I don't mean that. I stare at the sea this time with a vision of which you good people have no notion. As though I'd been blind and see suddenly; as though we had come from there and should return thither.

MÄURER

[*Laughing.*] Water thou art, to water thou shalt return.— How's your wife? Will you smoke, Schilling?

SCHILLING

[*Flighty and distraught.*] There's a sound in my head as of drums and cymbals.— Smoke? — Evelyn is quite cheerful, thank God! At least, in so far as she can be. Frankly, I never saw her in an entirely pleasant frame of mind. [*He sits down on the dune.*] We'd better talk about something else.— In all our miseries, I tell you, the great question is, of course, whether one has the strength to master them. Well, if you've tried to do that in every conceivable way, to the very point of imbecility and yet always in vain — why then the great moment comes in which you're coolly and completely indifferent. And I've reached that moment.

MÄURER

[*Pats his shoulder.*] That's progress, my boy, if it's so.

SCHILLING

Of course, it's progress! Surely! Otherwise, do you suppose I would have come? I wouldn't have been able to escape.

[*A silence.*

MÄURER

What do you say if we, as two old friends, were to drop all euphemisms and all so-called delicacy of feeling? Let's assume that our feeling for each other is honest and decent — why shouldn't it be frank and strong as well! So, if you won't take it amiss, I'd like to ask you . . .

SCHILLING

It's all over between Hanna Elias and myself. [*Another silence.*

I can't tell you — you wouldn't believe it — how madly I threw away my time this summer — and you remember how precious my time used to be to me? I can't bear to hear a clock tick; every swing of the pendulum frightens me.

MÄURER

Who hasn't wasted his time with women? More — what man, what real man hasn't lost his true self to more than one woman. There's no harm in that. Your innermost self may sink, but you pick it up; you may lose it for a time, but you find it again. The main thing is that you keep your power of self-direction. If you keep that and live on determinedly, I'll wager that what, from the point of view of time, has been called evil, will also, in time, come to be called good.

SCHILLING

Oh, my boy, in the course of my bungled life I've had to gorge down so much damnable nonsense! With my unconventional decency of character I've made a fiasco so damned often, that I've honestly reflected again and again as to what means a man must take to become in the vulgar, swinish sense — practical! No use! I've no talent in that direction. And yet I've looked at life from all sides, taken in every aspect of it — from above, below, behind, in front. And I can't help it! The result of my examination has always been the same.

At a distance, the world looks fair enough, maybe. Closely looked upon, it's stupid, vulgar and indecent beyond words.

MÄURER

Schilling, I let the world go its own gait. Don't let us waste our time over it. The world! Even I didn't always show you my best side. Let that be; don't think of it. And now, my boy, I'll tell you something mystical: We are of the same generation. I assert that we both appeared on the crust of this planet in the same year. And thus, it seems to me, we have wandered together before — in a similar rhythm and keeping step. And though we were united then by no external bond, yet now that we meet again, we have, at least in the deeper sense, gone the same distance and reached the same point. And so let us, with conscious strength, walk side by side for a good piece of the way.

SCHILLING

[*With forced merriment.*] Agreed, then! We'll have a good time here! Confound it, let's drink our fill of good German champagne and act as though we were seventeen with all our hopes and visions unblurred and all our disillusions forgotten.

[*Both friends fall into a mood of nervous joy when suddenly* SCHILLING *is startled by the sight of the figurehead.*

Aha, aha! What have we here? What strange creature is that?

MÄURER

The figurehead of a wrecked ship.

SCHILLING

Wherever you go you find these mad females.

MÄURER

She does look a little moonstruck.

SCHILLING

Look here, don't you see a resemblance in her to some one we know?

MÄURER

She reminds Lucy of her mother.

SCHILLING

No, I don't mean Lucy's mother. But the expression, the hair, the gesture . . .!

MÄURER

I see faintly what you mean. But I don't approve of this nosing around after resemblances. You trust an old, scarred veteran like me, my boy: don't lose yourself in the contemplation of resemblances. Those are snares that one sets for oneself. And if that wooden doll does resemble Hanna Elias, just remember that with her lustful nose she led her ship into an abyss the wetness of which was not merry to experience.— Breathe, man, inhale the vigorous air. Don't let the spectre of your life of yesterday blur the life you're really living to-day.

SCHILLING

There's no more danger of that, thank God. I assure you that this business with Hanna, which

has cost me quite enough, God knows, has now definitely disappeared from sight. We've finally clarified everything so thoroughly and turned the light on the remotest crannies of our relationship to such an extent that there's nothing left to discuss.

MÄURER

Then I congratulate you from my heart.

SCHILLING

It's dead and done with, coffined, and buried twelve fathoms deep under the earth.— But, Ottfried, do me one favour: don't allude to it, not by a word, not by a sound.— You know me well enough, Ottfried. If you see a recollection starting up in me, let it go, take no notice of it. Sometimes it's the merest bagatelle.

MÄURER

A resemblance . . .

SCHILLING

A dark eyebrow, an expression around the mouth — such things can bring the dead to life! But let me be, don't bother me then. It paralyses my brutality. And it takes brutality, it takes all one's strength to master the pallid beings of one's yesterday! [*He jumps up, throws down his hat and cane and knapsack and begins to strip off his clothes.*] And now, old boy, for cleanness, freedom, air! Thank God, here one can breathe again. Here's hoping for a storm! I need all that is wild and fresh and madly boundless and briny!

A bath! No clacking of women! No wagging of tongues in night *cafés!* I'll go to my death in freedom, if need be! Very well! Only I don't want to be throttled in a sewer.

[*He runs, half naked, toward the sea.*

MÄURER

Don't go out too far, Schilling!

SCHILLING'S VOICE

Bathe with me, Ottfried! It's magnificent! Ahoy! Ahoy!

THE SECOND ACT

The low and narrow dwelling room of KLAS OLFERS' *family in his island inn. Through a door in the background one catches sight of the hall and of ladder-like stairs that lead to the attic. Beyond the hall, through another open door, one has a glimpse of the large sitting room for guests. The wall to the right also contains a door which leads to a dark and overflowing storeroom, in which* KLAS OLFERS *keeps supplies for the needs of the poor fishermen. Against the same wall stands an old leathern sofa; in front of it stands a table, over it is suspended a cheap hanging lamp and around the table stand yellow pine chairs. By the side of the sofa hangs a clock. The wall to the left shows a small window with mull curtains. In front of this window stands a small sewing table of walnut; in the corner to the left a desk of the same wood; in the corner to the right a white tile-stove. Over the sofa hangs a chromo lithograph of the Imperial family; the floor is covered by a carpet pieced together from remnants of cloth, the table by a red and white checked cover. Upon the little crocheted center-piece of the sewing table are family photographs in little pasteboard frames. Against the left wall a chest of drawers on which stand a porcelain*

clock and little earthenware vases with paper flowers. On the bookcase which forms the top of the desk there is a stuffed sea-mew which touches the whitewashed ceiling with its head. The impression created by the room is one of extreme modesty and bleakness.

It is eight o'clock in the morning. Klas Olfers, *over fifty years old, grey bearded with parchment like skin of an alarmingly bluish colour watches the maid laying the breakfast table. Since the events of the first act three days have passed.*

The vigorous cracking of a whip is heard out of doors.

Klas Olfers

[*Attentive at once.*] Hullo! What's that?

The Maid

That'll be old Mathew from the ferry island with his lame white horse. He's bringing up two strange ladies in his waggon.

Klas Olfers

[*At the window.*] Hey! Mathew! What's that you've been fetching so early in the morning?

Voice of Mathew

Eh, that can't be helped, Klas Olfers.

Klas Olfers

I'm coming this minute! You hurry up, lass. Help the ladies out of the waggon!

THE MAID

There's only one of them left in the waggon.

[HANNA ELIAS *appears in the hall door. Her hair is of raven blackness; she wears a dark, broad straw-hat trimmed with poppy flowers. Her skin is waxen in whiteness and almost transparent. Her features are most delicate in their modelling as well as intelligent. Her eyes are large, dark and restless. All her gestures have an air of disquietude. So soon as external things do not fix her attention, she seems to lapse into reflection over a problem which is hopeless of solution and yet demands it. Her garments betray, altogether, an exotic taste and, indeed, her whole appearance has something strange about it. She is delicately built, rather small, and belongs to that class of women of whom it is difficult to determine whether they have passed twenty or thirty.*

HANNA

[*In good German but with slight foreignness of intonation.*] May one get lodging here for a night or two?

KLAS OLFERS

Surely! Of course! That won't cause us any great trouble! This place of mine is full to the brim. But I'm afraid there's plenty of room left all the same.

HANNA

[*Speaking to some one behind her.*] We will take two rooms, won't we, Miss Majakin?

MISS MAJAKIN

[*Entering.*] If you please I'll take a room for myself.

[MISS MAJAKIN *is a Russian girl from St. Petersburg. Although she is not tall, she seems older than her years, for she has nothing about her that is adolescent or immature. Her dress is simple and unobtrusive in every detail.*

KLAS OLFERS

[*Turning his little, embroidered cap in his hands.*] You can have two adjoining rooms, ladies, both with windows to the sea. Do you want to go to your rooms right away?

MISS MAJAKIN

If you want to stay here . . . I think I'll go up first.

HANNA

[*Who seemed undecided.*] So will I, of course.

KLAS OLFERS

Hurry, lass! Go ahead of them. [THE MAID *squeezes past the two ladies and one hears her hurriedly clattering up the stirs.* KLAS *continues.*] Then maybe I can ask you kindly to go on.

[*His little cap still in his hand he stands*

by the door. The ladies follow the maid after Hanna *has carefully searched the room with her eyes and leaned her sunshade against a chair.* Klas *follows the ladies so that the room remains empty.*

[*A fisherman in a blue jacket sticks his blond, bearded head into the room from the store room. It is* Schuckert.

Schuckert

Hey! Klas Olfers! I'd like to have a twelve yard piece o' rope! Hey! Klas!

[*Since the best room and breakfast table inspire him with a certain respect,* Schuckert *softens his voice. Through the hall the gigantic, black-haired old fisherman* Mathew *carries the ladies' luggage.* Klas Olfers *coming down the stairs meets him.*

Klas Olfers

[*Now in the hall.*] You'd better let them stand down-stairs, Mathew! A fellow like you might trample right through my floors with his oiled boots. — Come into the guest room and drink a glass o' beer.

Mathew

[*Lets the luggage lie, straightens himself up, takes off his blue visored cap so that the air can pass over his head, but still holds the cap over him and with his right hand wipes the sweat from his forehead. He takes a loud breath of relief.*] 'Tis warm to-day, Klas, very warm.

KLAS OLFERS

[*To the servant girl who is hastening down the stairs.*] Carry the luggage up, lass!

SCHUCKERT

[*Watching what goes on in the hall has, for a moment, forgotten his errand. He now recalls it and cries.*] Klas! Hey, Klas Olfers, I'd like to have a rope! Klas! And two yards o' sailcloth . . . [*Since no one listens to him, he repeats*] . . . Sailcloth is what I want!

KLAS OLFERS

[*As he together with* MATHEW *enters the guest room opposite.*] Well, Mathew, how is it? When can we have some fine fat eel again?

[*They disappear into the guest room. From there one may hear now and then the heavy tread of the fishermen, the clinking of the beer glasses and the indefinite murmur of the low-German talk. Down the stairs and into the room comes* MÄURER *holding a book and some other printed matter in his hands.* MÄURER *unfolds a map but looks up from it with a shake of the head as the loud trampling on the stairs does not cease. Suddenly* LUCY *puts in her head at the window.*

LUCY

Good morning, Mr. Mäurer!

MÄURER

Well, somebody at last. Where has every one been? Do you people think I can live on air?

LUCY

Are you alone?

MÄURER

Utterly, and for over an hour.

[LUCY *disappears from the window, slips nimbly through the hall into the room, closes the door behind her and also closes the door to the storeroom. Then she goes silently up to* MÄURER, *puts her arms around him, pulls him backward so that the chair tilts and kisses him many times with a sane, unspoiled passion. In her short linen frock she has just come from bathing; she still carries her bathing-suit under her arm and her hair is open. At first* MÄURER *draws back a little. Then visibly warmed, he draws the girl down on his lap, kisses her on the mouth and inhales the fragrance of her refreshed body.*

MÄURER

You mermaid!

LUCY

I'm so glad to have you to myself again at last. That hardly happens any longer.

MÄURER

Except when the dogs bay the moon.

[*Silence and renewed kisses.*

LUCY

I sleep so little here, Ottfried. The night was bright as day again. After twelve o'clock I could still read without a candle.

[*She kisses him again.*

MÄURER

[*Still embraced by* LUCY.] Hold on, Lucy, don't be so imprudent.

LUCY

[*Is startled and falls silent for a moment. Then she laughs with renewed merriment from the depth of her sane, childlike soul. Her laughter is infectious.*] It's quite clear that you've swallowed no salt water yet this year, Ottfried! Otherwise you wouldn't give *that* for the opinion of all the philistines in the world. [*She laughs again in her hearty, healthy way. Then imitating* OLFERS.] "For a change we'll have eel for dinner again!" Oh!

MÄURER

Don't get hysterical, dear Lucy.

LUCY

And then we'll let Klas cook us a soup of his embroidered cap.

MÄURER

In cases like this my sister used always to assert that you have a presentiment of something!

LUCY

The sea! The sea! The sea! The sea! If I should happen to die and you want me to come to

life again and be as merry as ever — dip me in salt water!

[*Using a small hand-mirror, she gathers her hair.*

MÄURER

Tell me, have you seen Schilling?

LUCY

Schilling bathes even more recklessly than I do. He swims so far that you lose sight of him; he can hardly find his way out of the water.

MÄURER

I think his state of mind is growing visibly brighter.

LUCY

Of course it is.

MÄURER

His whole behaviour is freer and less constrained, just as it used to be long ago.

LUCY

He seems beside himself with delight. I've never known him this way.

MÄURER

I suppose you are right. You may well say that. When you saw him for the first time, the blow had already fallen on him.

[SCHILLING *appears at the window.*

Schilling

[*His lips blue with chill, his teeth rattling.*] A kingdom for a cup of hot coffee, my dears.

Mäurer

Schilling, I tell you that if you overdo so madly, you'll have to take the consequences some day. Either you'll drown, or you'll get such a cold in the head that you'll sneeze the rest of your life.

Schilling

I won't have to catch that; I have it already.

Lucy

Did you ever see any one so owl-like in his fear of water as Ottfried?

Schilling

Landlubber! Incorrigible, cowardly landlubber.
[*He sings.*

"By the water, by the water,
That's where I'm at home."

[*Singing and snapping his fingers, like a Tyrolese dancer, he leaves the window.*
[Lucy *and* Mäurer *laugh uninterruptedly while* Schilling *goes singing through the hall and into the room.*

Mäurer

Now for breakfast! Coffee! Hallo! In there!

SCHILLING

Klas Olfers! We'll break the house down!

[*In excited merriment they all drum on the table.* KLAS OLFERS *enters with a show of whimsical fear.*

KLAS OLFERS

For heaven's sake, ladies and gentlemen, what's the matter.

MÄURER

Our stomachs are empty.

KLAS OLFERS

Better than if it was your heads.

SCHILLING

Or our pocket-books.

[*The* MAID *comes in, very red in the face and carrying a heavy coffee tray.*

KLAS OLFERS

Lass, bring the coffee!

THE MAID

You get out of my way, Mr. Olfers.

[OLFERS *makes an effort to occupy less space.*

LUCY

You see, Mr. Olfers, your efforts in behalf of the household aren't even acknowledged.

KLAS OLFERS

A wise man is used to that from the women folks, Miss.

MÄURER

Did you get new guests?

KLAS OLFERS

Two women came by the sailboat from Breege.

SCHILLING

Young or old?

KLAS OLFERS

Fine and young. But I'm sure they must be from foreign parts.

MÄURER

The island is acquiring an international repute.

[THE MAID *has set the table and withdrawn.* MÄURER, SCHILLING *and* LUCY *start at once to eat heartily. They pour coffee and cream, open eggs, butter bread and arrange the cold cuts. They are not very careful of their manners. They exclaim and sigh in the pleasure of satisfying their hunger.*

KLAS OLFERS

[*Looks on and twirls his thumbs with satisfaction. Then he says.*] Aye, the sea gives folks an appetite. Glad you like it all.

MÄURER

Splendid. But tell me, Mr. Olfers, are we going to get roast pork for dinner?

KLAS OLFERS

That's possible, very likely.

MÄURER

I thought so.

KLAS OLFERS

Why did you think so?

MÄURER

Well, I thought the pig died of disease last night.

KLAS OLFERS

Aye, but fortunately I was insured.

[LUCY *and* SCHILLING *burst out laughing.*

KLAS OLFERS

Who is beginning to see the joke. What? Roast from that pig? Oh, no, ladies and gentlemen. You don't get anything like that at Klas Olfers'.

SCHILLING

Where do you get your coffee from?

KLAS OLFERS

From Stralsund.

SCHILLING

I didn't know that Stralsund was noted for its wheatfields.

KLAS OLFERS

Oh, oh, now you're making fun of me plainly.

[*He runs out with an air of humorous horror.*

LUCY

I wish you wouldn't always annoy the poor old fellow.

SCHILLING

So, and now a man can light up an imported cigar for tuppence. Calmly, too.

[*He leans back and draws out his cigar-case.*

MÄURER

But you weren't very hungry, after all.

SCHILLING

More thirsty than hungry. A light drink is what I need. Even the plainest lager is too heavy for me. I need something of which I can drink a good deal. The greenish drinking water here is simply horrible!

MÄURER

[*Leaning back.*] Well, what do you think about Greece to-day?

SCHILLING

What I always think! A formidable notion!

MÄURER

Wouldn't you for once like to see the Doric columns where they grow?

SCHILLING

Do you doubt it?

MÄURER

Well, then, we must begin to consider the matter quite seriously. That's what I mean.

SCHILLING

I've been considering it seriously ever since I was sixteen.

MÄURER

Yes, but not my very definite proposal.

LUCY

All last night in my dreams I seemed to be flying, with considerable difficulty, from one island to the next.

SCHILLING

Don't mention dreams to me. All night my soul dwelt in the eel which I ate for supper. So help me! And, being an eel, I cried out in fear of the fisherman's net!

MÄURER

[*Laughing.*] Let's stick to the subject, my boy. We're talking about Greece. You know that with some slight effort I can persuade myself that it's necessary for me to go there. And it's my firm

intention, too. Well, I don't see what you can urge against wandering about with us down there for the purpose of your general building up.

Schilling

[*In a changed voice.*] My dear boy, I put on my clothes in the morning, and I find that almost too much trouble. I take them off at night, and that's not so bad. But the two processes about exhaust what strength I have. Anything beyond that seems excessive to me.

Mäurer

Is that the result of your sea-bathing?

Schilling

God knows what it's the result of! There was a time in my life, I tell, when all I had to see on any grey day was a sunlit spot in the distance, against a mountain, for instance, or by some lake shore in Brandenburg — and at once my soul struck Eden from that spot. But what should I do in Greece to-day? I have nothing within me to glorify things with any longer. . . . Ah, let's stop the clock.

[*He gets up and stops the pendulum of the wall clock.*

Mäurer

"There was a time," you say. How does that help me? And you should leave this weakly, sentimental, Indian summer meditation to others. And we won't stop the clock any more either. [*He gets up and pushes the pendulum again so that the clock*

ticks. Lucy *laughs heartily.*] Deeds — that's what's wanted, my boy! You must paint, work! You have no idea how healthy that is.

Schilling

And I'll tell you another thing. I have a pretty vivid imagination. By means of it I've been going to Greece every spring and autumn since I was sixteen. In reality I never got there. Well, that kind of thing destroys faith in the possibility.

[Lucy *takes a guitar from the sofa and picks softly Beethoven's "Ruins of Athens."*

Mäurer

It isn't a question of faith but of the Berlin-Vienna-Trieste railroad and of the Austrian Lloyd. You buy your ticket and you're there. And when once you are there — it takes just four or five days you know — you suddenly see all the trash in the corner of some Berlin studio with entirely different eyes. In fact you don't see it at all any more, I assure you. So! I'm talking frankly to you.

Schilling

[*With noisy appearance of agreement.*] All right then! We'll start at noon to-day! I'll just finish smoking the cigar, and then I'll begin to pack my things. Now you've nothing more to say about me!

[Lucy *and* Mäurer *are thoroughly amused by* Schilling's *droll determination.* Schilling *has arisen and walks up and down puffing thick clouds of smoke.* Mäurer *has also arisen. He holds a*

cigar in his hand and makes several vain attempts to light a match.

MÄURER

By God, every time the idea gets hold of me that I may see that country again, the country of the golden and ivory Zeus, in which there were almost more gods of bronze and marble than there were men — every time that idea comes, I'm so excited I can't even light a match. Compared to that the barbarous world in which we live is after all filled only with grimacing apes.

SCHILLING

Present company excepted, I hope!

MÄURER

Of course; for according to Rasmussen it is clear that the old Greeks were like ourselves, fellows with long skulls and blond hair.

SCHILLING

I beg of you, don't talk to me about Rasmussen.

MÄURER

He may be at times as ridiculous and as stubborn as possible. But you always know where to find him when you want him.

SCHILLING

Thank God from whom all blessings flow — I don't need him.

LUCY

[*Puts her guitar aside and jumps up.*] I'm going to run away and dress myself. Then I'll practice a bit. For if we're really going to Greece I intend to have the queen invite me to play for her.

[*She hurries through the hall and up the stairs. Almost immediately the sound of her violin is heard.*

SCHILLING

No, Hellas and Rasmussen don't go together.

MÄURER

Never mind him. We're not talking about Rasmussen just now. We're talking about you and me. My idea would be to go first for a bit to Asia Minor and from there to Athens; then to stay at Corfu for two or three weeks. By March we can be in Florence where I've fortunately just the other day renewed my studio rental for three years. And there, not to speak of the things in the Uffizzi, you can see naked models again.

SCHILLING

I'd like to believe in it all, Ottfried, I assure you. And I'm almost on the point of believing. But, I tell you, it won't work. I could weep bloody tears to think of all I've sunk finally and irrevocably in the last five years. It's too late. I can't catch up with what I once was.

MÄURER

No one reaches the age of forty in this world without some deep wound. The fate of each man

is a knotty problem. But the unravelling must be some deed — not words.

SCHILLING

You stand there firmly planted on your feet and stroke your beard. In the end all circumstances combine to good for you, but for me to wretchedness.

MÄURER

I've always clung to one principle which I advise you to follow too. And it's this: Wring strength out of your very weakness.

SCHILLING

I haven't a farthing in my pocket.

MÄURER

It's ridiculous of you to emphasise that in view of our old friendship.

SCHILLING

That sounds very alluring. I've heard it before. From women. And it turned out pretty badly.

MÄURER

A friend and a woman are two different things. Need I remind you, Schilling, that in the old days I was so hungry once that I came to your door for sixpence in order to dine once more?

SCHILLING

Nothing holds me, nothing hinders me. I'm ready to travel to the moon with you this minute.

And yet I don't believe in the whole business.— Look, last night I received this letter from Evelyn, my spouse. You probably don't know that the turn of my affairs with Hanna has sent her up into the seventh heaven.— Well, half in jest, I gave her some intimation of your intentions. I talked rather big, the way one does, you know, said that all my activity hitherto was mere preparation and that I hoped now to begin my real work. And so on. And now I wish you'd read this dithyramb. [*He throws a letter over to* Mäurer.] Well, then! What's to keep me? Provided, of course, that some of the travelling money can be used to feed those at home.

Mäurer

You're thirty-seven, my boy. That's all. What do you exepct to have been doing except preparing yourself? The Japanese Hokusai said that nothing he had done before seventy was worth talking about. And you want to despair at your age?

Schilling

Good! I'll light me another cigar on that! [*Obviously excited he lights a second cigar.*] And why not? Very well, then! We'll give this business another trial. I always had a certain amount of form, or, well, style — but no self-confidence. It's quite true, I do feel somewhat different here. I feel . . . well, I see that energetic decisions have a good effect. I feel almost refreshed. I could almost be brought to believe that there is something in the world besides a kind of crippled racing after a bit of bread and similar lovely amuse-

ments. In the salt sea air the recollection of the . . . of the usual stench of life seems to grow pale. It's really possible here to ask the question whether it's absolutely necessary for a man to be sucked down into that damned whirlpool! Why? No! I don't believe it is! And I'm going to act according to that belief. I'm going to let it all stay here and sit and lie and crouch and thrust and stink according to its nature. Why shouldn't I? You think I can't do it? Why not? Oh, they cling like leeches, I tell you, they bind your hands and feet like Delilahs, they pour lead into your brain, they close your lips with their commonplaces and knock your last bit of honour and honesty out of your soul with a daily hailstorm of monstrous stupidities! Look for me in the Peloponnesus, ladies!

[*During this outburst, half-humorous and half deeply serious* Schilling *has arisen and walked swiftly up and down. The end of his speech is marked by his laughter and* Mäurer's.]

Mäurer

Good for you! A man must free his soul once in a while!

[Schilling *suddenly discovers the little sunshade of* Hanna Elias. *He picks it up and looks at it from all sides.*]

Schilling

[*Apparently lost in his contemplation of the sunshade.*] Look here, whom do you suppose this belongs to?

MÄURER

[*Looking at the sunshade.*] I suppose it's Lucy's. No, it isn't either. She never carries one.

SCHILLING

[*Still regards the sunshade. Then he looks with a questioning expression into* MÄURER*'s eyes, then again at the sunshade. Finally he opens it, examines the handle and reads the characters engraved on a little plate of silver: "For June 13, '99." Then he looks at* MÄURER *again, takes a few steps, absent mindedly, slowly and with a stupid smile toward the hall door. He speaks with shamefaced embarrassment.*] Incomprehensible! [*Then suddenly he seems to awaken and goes out with these words:*] Excuse me for a moment.

[*He is evidently on his way to the guest room to look for* KLAS.

MÄURER

[*Takes a walking cane and raps thrice against the ceiling. The playing of the violin ceases at once and* LUCY *comes rattling down the stairs and into the room.*

LUCY

Is Schilling here?

MÄURER

No, what's the matter?

LUCY

Just this moment in the dark passage between the rooms I met a lady who looked like Hanna Elias.

MÄURER

Hanna Elias? Oh, that's impossible! Did you speak to her?

LUCY

No! I was so surprised I couldn't have uttered a word. And then I wasn't entirely sure, either. It isn't light enough in the passage.

MÄURER

That's probably the reason you didn't see right. Although . . . Schilling just discovered a little green sunshade here! Is it possible that that misfortune is in the air. Well, at all events, I wouldn't say a word to her.

LUCY

[*Still holding the knob of the door which she closed behind her on entering.*] Let's ask Olfers, Ottfried!

MÄURER

Or go and get the register! A while ago I saw Olfers who is as curious as a magpie shuffle about the room of the strangers.

[LUCY *hurries determinedly into the guest room and returns at once with the register.*

LUCY

[*Has placed the book on the table and is rapidly turning the leaves.*] Well . . . Mrs. Hanna Elias. Here it is!

MÄURER

[*Approaches to ascertain for himself whether the name is really there.* LUCY *and he look at each other long in speechless surprise, indignation and disgust.*] That woman is certainly the damnedest . . .

LUCY

Hush, Ottfried, I believe I hear them now!

MÄURER

Then I'll creep through the window, dear child. I can't bear to see that bloodless face of hers. The unnatural changeling! The sight of her mask gives me the horrors. I'm afraid of being under the same roof at night with that ghost. I'm convinced that a white mouse or something like that jumps out of her mouth at nights and begins to suck one's life-blood. Good-bye! You'd better follow me! I'm going to flee.

[*While the voices of* SCHILLING *and* HANNA ELIAS *are heard approaching he climbs hurriedly out at the window.*

LUCY

Ottfried, Ottfried, don't act so senseless!

[*Left alone she is shaken by silent laughter. After she has recovered herself, she listens at the door and then slips out hur-*

riedly. Hanna Elias *and* Schilling *now come down the stairs. He precedes her into the room.*

Schilling

[*Whose face shows a sudden pallor of fear.*] They're not here any longer. They are gone. Probably went down to the beach. Wait, I'll hang up your jacket or . . . will you keep your hat on? [*His gestures are uncertain, his hands tremble with excitement. He sticks his head out at the window and calls:* "Ottfried! Ottfried! Miss Lucy!"] No! Sit down, Hanna. This is our private room. Olfers gave it to us that we mightn't be constantly annoyed by the commonplaces of the other guests, so! [*The door being closed, he also closes the window.*] And now please . . . enlighten me!

Hanna

[*Sits on the edge of a chair. Her outstretched arms are resting on the table. She picks at a piece of paper.*] You're not very glad to see me, are you?

Schilling

Primarily I'm surprised, dear Hanna. After all you couldn't expect me not to be, could you? Everything else is overshadowed by that.

Hanna

[*As before.*] You say that. For me everything else isn't, unhappily.

SCHILLING

You mustn't misunderstand me, Hanna. Of course I'm glad that you're here. But you'll admit that I could hardly think of expecting you after what happened and on this remote island! [*He tears open the window again suddenly and calls out.*] Ottfried! It seemed to me I heard his step.

HANNA

[*As before.*] That sounded almost like a cry for help!

SCHILLING

It only worries me that they don't know. Every morning we are accustomed to go up in the neighbourhood of the lighthouse, or else we meet near the graveyard wall. One has a wide view from there. I simply don't want them to wait for me.

HANNA

Don't let me interfere, Gabriel, if you have an engagement.

SCHILLING

[*In good natured anger.*] What? How? You're joking, Hanna.

HANNA

[*After a rather long silence.*] Yes . . . you want an explanation and perhaps I owe you one. We're staying at Breege on the island of Rügen. Last Friday I was at the doctor's and he sent me there. And quite by chance on the ship we heard that the sculptor Mäurer was here. And since I

had heard even in Berlin that you were with Ottfried Mäurer, of course I knew your whereabouts.

SCHILLING

[*With distrust.*] The doctor ordered you to Breege?

HANNA

I spat blood again for three days.

SCHILLING

[*Nervously as though he himself had a cough.*] My dear child! That you can't ever get over that entirely. It's frightful that a poor, delicate creature like you has to go through all that.

[*Impulsively he has taken her hand. She withdraws it gently and unpins her hat.*

HANNA

And really I didn't go to see the doctor on my own account at all. I didn't speak to him about myself.

SCHILLING

[*Strokes her hair.*] About whom did you consult him?

HANNA

Oh, it was only about my little boy. It was only about . . .

SCHILLING

Little Gabriel?

HANNA

He can't really sit up even yet.

Schilling

[*He withdraws his hand. With a sombre and embittered expression of countenance he walks up and down.*] Dear Hanna, I didn't make the world. I'm sorry. But I'm not responsible for the cruel jests of life. If I could I'd make the pitiful, wretched little fellow well at once. But it's impossible. I can't. I've gone through days and nights . . . But I'm at the end of my strength, Hanna. I can only let fate take its course.

Hanna

It is well that it is fate.

Schilling

Why?

Hanna

It is so easy to put things off on fate.

Schilling

[*Falls silent. He presses his hands against his temples. Desperate and driven beyond endurance he stares at the corner of the room. In this position he speaks after a while.*] Why did you come, dear Hanna?

Hanna

[*As before, quietly, but with a tremor in her voice.*] Because I can't live without you, dear.

Schilling

[*As though a new lash had struck his tormented soul.*] That's a lie! I don't believe it.

HANNA

[*Very calm but very pale.*] Why is that a lie, my darling?

SCHILLING

[*After a silence, with apparent firmness.*] Hanna, all that lies behind me. I've passed beyond it . . . left it behind me, conquered it by God's help. With bitter struggles, I tell you, I have at last thrust it away from my soul. There is no use talking. The end has come.

HANNA

Very well. [*She rises.*] You are influenced against me by some one. Some one whom I cannot get hold of has poured calumnies into your ears against me. Very well, I will not cross your path. Although I don't know what wrong I have been guilty of. But I beseech you, my beloved, for one last mercy: Don't let me go with this tormenting doubt and question in my heart; give me this last opportunity to wipe away the shame that would forever disfigure me in your memory: How did I lie to you, my beloved?

SCHILLING

It would be fairer to ask: how did you *not* lie to me? I admit that it's not always easy for a woman like yourself, a gifted and sensitive woman, to differentiate between truth and falsehood. But let that be. Why force me into other bitter confessions? It isn't a nice feeling to be cut by one's friends. I assure you it wasn't a very lofty moment when the first man turned his back on me at

the club — and then the second and the third. It doesn't feel exactly like a joke. However, that didn't touch my real self. And I could, at a pinch, pass it over that you and your husband entangled me into your disorderly hole of a household and then played for my benefit the coldly calculated comedy of separation. Oh, I could let that go. You people pretended to no moral prejudices. But the things that later your wonderful liberality toward your countrymen made you capable of . . . *there* are things for which I haven't a name.

HANNA

Slanders!

SCHILLING

Very likely. [*He lights his cigar which has gone out and says coldly and in a changed tone.*] Tell me, Hanna, when are you going to leave?

[*A remarkable indifference seems now to overtake him. He sits down comfortably on the sofa and seems to devote himself entirely to puffing at his cigar.* HANNA, *on the other hand, walks excitedly up and down.*

HANNA

I thought this was a public inn. All one need do is to pay one's reckoning. I'll leave when I get ready. I will assuredly not leave before tomorrow. I have a young Russian friend with me and I won't be made ridiculous in her eyes.

SCHILLING

Why did you bring your friend along?

HANNA

Why are you staying with a friend? I care little about her; I don't need her. But she clung to me; she has no friends in Berlin. She is a harmless little creature . . . and I am a woman deserted by all the world.

[*She stands at the window and weeps softly.*

SCHILLING

[*After a silence, gently.*] I advise you to go back to your husband.

HANNA

[*Suddenly and with passionate vehemence.*] Never! Never! Why do you say that, Gabriel? You know how that wounds me in my inmost soul. I'll have nothing more to do with him. I'll eat dry bread with my child but I'll never beg a penny of him again. I'd rather go back to Odessa and with my child in my arms be driven to Siberia.

SCHILLING

[*Rises, sighs and walks about.*

HANNA

You torment a woman. Only a German is capable of that.

SCHILLING

Very well, Hanna, let's assume that. And now be so good as to calm yourself, will you? Try to see things in the light of your undoubted intellect! — Leave me! Don't pursue me for a few weeks or months! You see, it's this way: I'm no

longer myself. My whole character, every natural and spontaneous instinct of my soul — everything has been warped by my life with you. I've grown to be a stranger to myself. I have been withdrawn and estranged from all the real qualities and purposes of my life, from the very conditions of existence and of growth for me. I've lost all that and I'm seeking to find it again. And to do that — I must be alone, Hanna. I must have a chance for self-recollection; I must almost become a child again, and learn to walk and to grow again — just like a child!

HANNA

Oh, I understand. I see through the whole intrigue. I know the man who originated it. He avoided me from the beginning. The moment you introduced us to each other I knew that he was my enemy. Well, I do not ask justice of him. But if he asserts that he is more eager to further your highest interests than I am . . . if Ottfried Mäurer asserts that, Gabriel, I need pay no attention to such vulgar lies!

SCHILLING

[*Presses her wrist and finds himself more and more in the grip of a different emotion.*] Understand, try to understand, dearest Hanna . . . I'd like to cry out, to make it clear to you . . .

HANNA

And I wish that I were far away from here!

SCHILLING

[*Embracing her passionately.*] Stay, stay! Forgive me, dearest Hanna!

THE THIRD ACT

Between two sand dunes a broad path extends toward the background, disappearing among the sand hills. In the angle, formed by the farther hills, the deep blue sea is visible; above it the brighter blue of the cloudless sky. To the right of the path, in the foreground, but slightly raised, lies a graveyard; a part of its low, enclosing wall is visible and above this wall projects an ancient crucifix. Built into the wall and jutting out into the foreground is the shingled dead house. There is no vegetation save a windblown juniper bush beside the wall. Near this bush a bench was built years ago of four posts and a board. The bench is badly weatherbeaten but is still standing. To the left of the path lie the ruined remains of an ancient monastery in the form of impressive but almost wholly crumbled walls. An arch of brownish red brick-work is best preserved. Behind the ruins arise several ancient poplars and ash-trees. A sombre romance seems to brood over the spot. Not more than two hours have passed since the happenings of the previous act.

Not far from the bench LUCY *lies amid the thyme, reading.* MÄURER *comes along the path from the sea and approaches her.*

MÄURER

Good thing that you're alone, little girl! I was afraid that possibly you were already swamped in Russian chatter. This is a damnable mess!

LUCY

I don't believe poor Schilling will come here with his ladies. He's scared.

MÄURER

How in the name of God can a man let a woman so get the upper hand of him that he can't move without having her on his track? I'm sick of the whole island now. The woman, you may be sure, has scented the fact that we had a plan to help Schilling. She has to cross that, of course. No feeling of decency, nothing in the world will restrain her. But I've been thinking it all over on my walk. I'll resist her schemes with all my energy to the last. I'll rob her of her prey.

LUCY

Perhaps things aren't as bad as you fancy, Ottfried, and Schilling has enough will-power of his own.

MÄURER

When it comes to will-power, I don't trust him. No! Especially not now. He needs help, absolutely! And help of the most determined kind. And I'll give him that help. But whether it will avail against her superior female strategy — that's another question.

LUCY

[*Laughs.*] You'll end by interesting me in her thoroughly.

MÄURER

I don't deny that she is interesting. She reminds me, at times, of a figure by Goya. I can imagine without difficulty that her real home is there [*he points to the graveyard*], that she dwells among graves and is condemned, throughout eternity, to nourish her ghostly existence by sucking the blood of men.

LUCY

[*Laughing again.*] In that case one would have to forgive her.

MÄURER

Not at all. I don't make pets of ghosts.

LUCY

But I tell you, Ottfried, I don't know why — but everything here seems ghostly to me: the sea by day, the uninterrupted roaring and trampling of the surf by night! The very stars and the milky way are ghostly to me! And I am glad that it is so. That's why I like to lie by this wall out here.

MÄURER

I can add another perception to that and one which most people have lost: the clear feeling which I have here continually that behind this visible world another is hidden. It lies so near that often one might almost knock at its gate. If this is the feeling you harbour, little girl, I have no ob-

jection. However, I'm responsible for you. And when I brought you here I had no idea that I would be entangling you in a coil of sombre imaginings.

LUCY

You think my dreams about mother seem sombre to me?

MÄURER

One shouldn't dream with one's eyes open or in bright daylight. It's my own experience that all ghosts drink blood. We haven't blood enough to endure that for any length of time.

LUCY

But you're mistaken if you think that this strange condition which I enjoy experiencing is harmful to me. It's pleasant and salutary. It is as though we saw some one open a door and pass into unknown spaces and while the door opens and closes our soul and sight catch a glimpse of the unknown.

MÄURER

I know how alluring that condition is . . . a middle state, one might call it, in which the visionary seems to interpenetrate real life. One is on earth and yet projects into the supra-sensual. And yet man is quite sensible in having a horror of death and of the psychical conditions that follow and that stir up one's soul.

LUCY

I feel serene rather than stirred up. I merely rest in the serene consciousness that I am united to

mother.— And the mystic is weaving itself into everything about me. I can't persuade myself that the roar of the sea and the light and the trill of the larks — that these things are the final things.

MÄURER

[*Puts his arm about* Lucy.] Well, I hope that we are reality and not merely appearance.

LUCY

Do you think we are, dearest? I'm not so sure.
[*He kisses her warmly.*

MÄURER

I'll take you along with me into eternity, beyond all the planets and the fixed stars of the universe.

LUCY

Really?

MÄURER

What's troubling you, Lucy?

LUCY

Nothing. [*She looks straight at him with her large, moist eyes.*] I sometimes think — and Schilling's affairs illustrate it again — that if art and love ever came to conflict in your life, that art would be to you the all-important.

MÄURER

True. But in our case the two go hand in hand, sweetheart.

LUCY

Didn't this Elias woman have a little son just two years ago?

MÄURER

Yes, and she even insists that it's Schilling's child.

LUCY

Well, and so?

MÄURER

Oh, it's quite possible. The little kid is exquisite to look at and blond; unfortunately he's too frail to live.

LUCY

Well, and Schilling?

MÄURER

[*Shrugs his shoulders.*] During the first years of its life, Lucy, a child's mother is its fate. She neglects hers because she prefers to sit in Vienna *cafés* and talk politics to out-at-heels students. She thinks of it fast enough when it's to be used as a weapon against Schilling. And in fact I'm surprised that she has this time denied herself the fine effect of appearing with her child in her arms, in the guise of a deserted mother.

LUCY

Really you are quite hard — but I love you, Ottfried.

MÄURER

[*Laughs.*] My hardness will make me wear well. And isn't it a fact that women, like children, are fond of breaking what they love?

LUCY

Sh! Ottfried! They're coming! For Schilling's sake we ought to go and meet them.

MÄURER

I hate to do it, little girl, like anything!

[*The heads of* SCHILLING, HANNA ELIAS, *and* MISS MAJAKIN *emerge on the path in the background.* LUCY *has jumped up with an elastic movement,* MÄURER *rises slowly and unwillingly, but dusts himself off and joins* LUCY *to meet the company.*

SCHILLING'S VOICE

Coo-ee!

[MÄURER *walks on but does not answer. The meeting of the friends takes place in the background. Indistinct voices are heard. A sea-mew flies diagonally across the valley of the dunes and over the churchyard. After a time* MÄURER *and* MISS MAJAKIN *separate from the rest of the group and come forward. The others ascend the hillocks, stand there awhile lost in a view of the sea and then disappear in the background.*

MÄURER

You've known Mrs. Elias for a long time?

MISS MAJAKIN

[*Speaking slowly and thoughtfully and betraying her Russian origin in her pronunciation.*] Oh, no, only a little while. We met at Berlin at the recent session of the great international women's congress. My father is a physician, my mother is dead. For the last four years I have been travelling about Europe with papa. He has given up his . . . his . . . what do you call it? Yes, practice.

MÄURER

I thought that perhaps your acquaintance with Mrs. Elias originated in Russia.

MISS MAJAKIN

Oh, no. As I said, it is recent. But I admire Hanna greatly, I reverence her, I love her. I think she is a remarkable woman, very surprising, wonderfully interesting and clever.

MÄURER

In what respect does she seem remarkable to you?

MISS MAJAKIN

I do not love women who are slaves, who permit their right to life to wither. I honour her greatly, I owe her much. I may almost say that she has helped me to a new religion, a religion of beauty.

MÄURER

Haven't you in Russia a great many women like her?

Miss Majakin

No. We have women who talk all day of politics and not at all of art. They are superficial. They are rarely fascinated by art. And it is beautiful to observe how fascinated she is by the great art of Professor Schilling.

Mäurer

[*With a sardonic smile that strives to be amiable.*] Yes. Very nice, indeed. What is one to say? And you've absorbed this religion of Mrs. Elias into yourself now? Eh?

Miss Majakin

Unhappily I am still very young and ignorant. I can't lay claim to anything like her understanding. And I must beg of you to be charitable with me. But I saw at once in the National Gallery that Professor Schilling is a great artist.

Mäurer

Where did you see that?

Miss Majakin

In the museum at Berlin where Mrs. Elias was kind enough to show me the famous works of Professor Schilling.

Mäurer

I believe if you were to tell our good friend that he is a professor and that his works hang in the National Gallery that you'd amuse him most mightily.

Miss Majakin

What is that?

Mäurer

Nothing, nothing at all!

Miss Majakin

But it's a great pity for so eminent a man!

Mäurer

[*After a surprised side-long stare at her.*] That's probably true. But I hope it isn't too late yet to help him. Whence do you get all that insight, though?

Miss Majakin

Oh, it isn't hard to read in his fevered, pain-touched eyes, and in the lines of suffering in his beautiful, wasted face.

Mäurer

[*Almost frightened.*] Do you believe he's physically ill?

Miss Majakin

You can understand that I wouldn't talk of his psychical sufferings.

Mäurer

It really amuses me every time I find people frightened by Schilling's appearance. It usually happens when they see him for the first time. Schilling looked just that way eighteen years ago. He used to make the joke that one could observe

the world much more accurately and thoroughly through two dark circles around one's eyes.

MISS MAJAKIN

[*Not entering into the spirit of his remarks.*] Just think, professor! According to your etchings which I saw in St. Petersburg and which I love very much I had the idea that you looked liked that, too.

MÄURER

How is that? You know my etchings?

MISS MAJAKIN

Oh, when I was only twelve or thirteen my papa showed them to me in Russian collections.

MÄURER

If you have a father like that, you don't need Hanna Elias.

MISS MAJAKIN

I thought of you as a tall, pallid figure with coal black eyes and thin lips — a man burned out and tormented by great and fearful visions as by a fever. And I find a healthy scholar.

MÄURER

[*Shrugs his shoulders and laughs.*] That's the way things happen in this world. It's an unforgivable mistake to approach one's ideals too closely.

[*During this conversation the two, now standing still, now strolling on, have*

gradually reached the little bench by the wall.

MÄURER

But I beg of you now to turn your eyes from the innocent cause of your disenchantment and look at our wonderful surroundings.

MISS MAJAKIN

You love loneliness, above all, it seems.

MÄURER

[*In merry excitement.*] If I'm left utterly to my own devices for six or eight hours a day I'm equal to the gods. A day in society, however, reduces me to the level of that poor, robbed and beaten man who was faring from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves.

MISS MAJAKIN

Oh, I love society — I love men!

MÄURER

Then I suppose you don't like our island where there are no Vienna *cafés,* no concerts and no theatres.

MISS MAJAKIN

Oh, no, I can understand how all this has a greatness and beauty that are almost oppressive. But in such surroundings I suffer from a sense of my own insignificance and solitariness. On the other hand, I love man as though he were a god! These dead sandhills that cannot hear the cry of my heart

have no meaning for me. I was not made for them nor they for me. But man is to man his good, heaven, world, home and refuge. I can't put any meaning into this dead nature.

MÄURER

[*Taken aback.*] How old are you, anyhow, Miss Majakin?

MISS MAJAKIN

Three days ago was my eighteenth birthday.

MÄURER

Ah, let me offer my belated congratulations.

[LUCY *in her temperamental way comes across the dunes forward.*

LUCY

You're leaving us most treacherously in the lurch, dear Ottfried.

MÄURER

[*Coolly.*] In what way?

LUCY

I hope I'm not in the way here, too?

MÄURER

[*Briefly and drily.*] Why too? By no means, Lucy.

LUCY

[LUCY *is slightly startled, laughs and sits down on the sand at some distance. She*

pulls up blades of grass and chews them, at the same time unobtrusively watching Mäurer *and* Miss Majakin.

Lucy

Your rapid retreat rather hurt our friend Schilling, I believe, Ottfried.

Mäurer

[*Glances at* Lucy *over his glasses and shakes his head perceptibly in astonishment and disapproval at her indiscretion. Then he turns with a shrug to* Miss Majakin.] What were we talking about, Miss Majakin?

Miss Majakin

Oh, I beg your pardon, professor, but what is the nature of these old ruins here?

Mäurer

They are the remains of a cloister. The settlement is ancient and was made by the Franciscans. The grey monks of Stralsund dwelled here. The old cellar vaults are still intact and I believe that any one who can see ghosts may still have a nightly vision of the old *fratres* and *patres* celebrating the mass and holding their processions.

Lucy

Could you possibly tell me, Ottfried, whether toward the west there are other islands.

Mäurer

No.

LUCY

All day, unfortunately, I hear the ringing of bells.

MÄURER

So do I. It may be a bell-buoy or more likely an absolute delusion of the senses.

MISS MAJAKIN

I can hardly believe it real when I think that the passionate wish of my crude girlhood, the wish to see you, has been suddenly so wonderfully fulfilled on this unknown, lonely island, in this strange and alien place.

[*She looks at her hands which are picking a plant to bits.* SCHILLING *and* HANNA ELIAS *appear in the background.*

SCHILLING

[*With clown-like gestures, crying.*] Ahoy! Cuckoo! Ahoy! Cuckoo!

MÄURER

[*Nervously disquieted.*] I'd almost like to be frank with you. I don't know just why, but there's no harmony, no sympathy between your friend Mrs. Elias and myself. She puts me into the most uncomfortable mood. It's unjust, perhaps, but every expression of hers, every gesture, every word provokes me. If you don't mind and don't find my society burdensome, we might escape for a while longer by going around the wall.

LUCY

[*With decision.*] You would be insulting Schilling cruelly.

SCHILLING

[*As before, somewhat nearer.*] Ahoy! Cuckoo!

[*The cry of the cuckoo which* SCHILLING *imitates loudly and quite faithfully is clearly echoed each time from the direction of the churchyard.*

MÄURER

[*Shrugs his shoulders, turns red with anger but says with apparent carelessness.*] Where are you going to spend the coming winter, Miss Majakin?

MISS MAJAKIN

In Berlin. My father has been thinking of working in the library there until March.

SCHILLING

[*Still nearer.*] Cuckoo! [*Echo:* "Cuckoo!"] Ahoy! [*And the echo repeats:* "Ahoy!"] Do you hear the cuckoo, my friends?

MÄURER

[*Calls out.*] A cuckoo in autumn? Your natural science is wobbly.

SCHILLING

[*With an air of exaggerated energy which hides his embarrassment and secret beseeching.*] On my word, Ottfried! Can't you hear it?

LUCY

[*To* OTTFRIED.] You can prove it by the fact that cuckoos are found at night among the dead birds who have been killed under the panes of the lighthouse.

SCHILLING

[*As before.*] Cuckoo! (*Echo:* "Cuckoo!") Cuckoo! (*Echo:* "Cuckoo!")

MÄURER

You're in a very jovial mood.

SCHILLING

You people are laughing because you don't really know who is answering us there.

MÄURER

Well, I thought it was a cuckoo!

SCHILLING

The deuce it is, Ottfried! It's the grim old jester with his scythe who sits behind the dead house there. Don't you hear him sharpening it? [*The sharpening of a scythe is heard.*] Cuckoo! [*The echo answers louder than ever. The company bursts out into nervous laughter.*] Which of you people has good eyes? Let him read the inscription on the hook and ladder shanty — I meant to say the chapel.

LUCY

[*Reads slowly and loud*] "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O

grave, where is thy victory." I Corinthians, xv, 54, 55.

SCHILLING

[*With a theatrically wild gesture.*] Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo!

[*The echo answers each time.*

MÄURER

I wish you'd stop that horrid nonsense.

[SCHILLING *has now approached with* HANNA ELIAS. *The latter is very pale.*

SCHILLING

[*With a convulsive effort to seem unembarrassed.*] Permit me to introduce you people. Ottfried Mäurer! Mrs. Hanna Elias, an excellent friend of mine for years. A kingdom for a glass of Pilsner, ladies and gentlemen!

MÄURER

I forgot that again. Confound it all! So soon as we get back I'll wire to Stralsund and by tomorrow we'll have a whole keg.

HANNA

[*Aloud to* MISS MAJAKIN.) He was terribly depressed, just as he told me, and now all his good spirits have returned.

SCHILLING

[*With ironic enthusiasm.*] It's the unspeakable joy, my dear child! Just pure joy!

HANNA

[*In a sombre tone.*] Oh, I don't assume that I'm the only cause of your joy. Nevertheless I feel clearly how important it was to come here.

SCHILLING

[*With overwhelmingly ironical eloquence.*] And you have my gratitude, O woman of many sacrifices.

MÄURER

Perhaps it would interest you, Miss Majakin, to glance at the poverty-stricken, nameless graves.

SCHILLING

Trying to sneak off again, eh, Ottfried?

MÄURER

Sneak off? I don't know what you're talking about.

SCHILLING

I thought the company of an artist who hasn't your power of sitting at his work might annoy you.

MÄURER

[*In a cutting tone.*] I usually stand at my work. We'll come back presently. I merely want to show this lady the strange inscriptions in the graveyard.

SCHILLING

A dead grasshopper hops no more.

MÄURER

What do you mean?

SCHILLING

That would be a nice inscription, too. People are lying in their graves up there who don't know how ever they got here.

MÄURER

Yes, ship-wrecked sailors.

SCHILLING

They arrived unhurt, feet foremost. Only their drawers were a bit wet. But they dried in time. Some came without hats, others without socks. What does that matter to a good, old salt? One can sponge and borrow all one's life.

MÄURER

If this is a symptom of the good spirits you've recovered, dear Schilling, I'd be tempted to wish back your bad mood of this morning.— Excuse us for a moment.

[MÄURER *and* MISS MAJAKIN *walk on and are seen entering at the little iron gate of the churchyard.* SCHILLING *looks after them, shrugs his shoulders, laughs a short laugh, sits down on the bench and draws* HANNA *down beside him. His eyes are still fixed on the receding figures. Then he swings suddenly around and looks with a lost and hopeless smile at* LUCY *who is still lying quietly in the sand.*

Schilling

Ah, yes, that's the way of the world, Miss Lucy.

Lucy

[*Rubs the thyme between her hands and answers significantly.*] Man proposes and the — coachman disposes.

Hanna

Thank heaven, even in Zürich, at the university, I schooled myself not to be impressed by men who are discourteous.

Schilling

And I refused to be impressed by people who walk on their successes as on stilts.

Lucy

That didn't come from your heart, Schilling. [*She rises.*] By the way if Ottfried comes back and misses me — though I don't anticipate it — please tell him I've gone home.

Schilling

[*Repeating* Lucy's *words with reference to* Miss Majakin.] Man proposes and the coachman disposes! There's no dependence in such matters. Surprises never cease. [*With a wink.*] Shall we be sly and investigate?

[Schilling *has arisen and creeps up to the wall with comical caution, as though he wanted to watch* Mäurer *and* Miss Majakin. *Then he climbs on the wall.*

LUCY

[*Laughing involuntarily.*] Don't fall down, whatever you do.

SCHILLING

Especially not backwards into the graveyard.

LUCY

No. If possible, then better forward.

[SCHILLING *lets himself fall forward with comic intention.* LUCY *runs away laughing.* SCHILLING *gets up and dusts off his clothes.*

HANNA

Did you hurt yourself, Gabriel?

SCHILLING

Not a bit. I believe I slid down quite voluntarily. [*Drawing her to him and whispering passionately.*] Shall we go to the dunes again? To hunt amber, I mean?

HANNA

[*Pale and excited.*] Do with me as you would.

SCHILLING

It was strange, wasn't it? The wild swans crying above us! Did it frighten you?

HANNA

A little.

SCHILLING

It didn't frighten me. If they had been eagles with claws I wouldn't have let you loose! O you dark creature, you snowqueen, you bride of Corinth! [*He is startled.*] Do you see Mäurer?

HANNA

Thank heaven, no, I don't see him.

SCHILLING

[*Secretively and maliciously.*] He's nibbling at your friend, isn't he?

HANNA

I admire him neither as an artist nor as a man. All he can do is to insult defenceless women.

SCHILLING

[*With comical indignation.*] It is true, Hanna! Shall I challenge him?

HANNA

I know you are jesting. I don't want you to do it and you wouldn't either.

SCHILLING

Thirst! Thirst! [*He kneels down with his face above a puddle of water and drinks.*] Oh, how good it tastes! [*He sees his image in the water.*] Good heavens! Is that myself?

HANNA

You're not drinking that greenish water, are you?

[*A crow cries above.*

SCHILLING

Damned crow! Will you hold your tongue? Come here a minute, Hanna! Look at me! How do I look?

HANNA

Quite as usual, dearest.

SCHILLING

Very well! Then what's the use of going to Greece? [*He has arisen and stares motionless at the sea.*

HANNA

[*No longer able to master her secret anxiety over* SCHILLING'S *strange condition.*] If you command me to leave this very moment, Gabriel, I'll leave — within the hour. Command me! I know that you're dependent on this cold, heartless man. I'll only kiss your hand and then go away. I can see . . . I don't want you to be tormented.

SCHILLING

Listen! You can hear the roaring of the sea even here! [*He listens. In moveless visionary delirium, as though he has sight of unearthly things, he raises his arms ecstatically.*] Oh! Oh! Oh! The sea! The sea! [*As though blinded by a super-*

natural splendour into which he would melt, he totters.

HANNA

For heaven's sake! What's the matter with you, Gabriel?

SCHILLING

Nothing! Nothing at all! I'm tired! I'd rest! Just rest, my dear! [*He leans so heavily upon* HANNA *that she is forced to let him glide to earth.*

HANNA

Gabriel! Gabriel! Gabriel!

THE FOURTH ACT

A room in the second story of KLAS OLFERS' *inn. The walls are white and there are two windows in the rear wall. From these windows one has a view of the sea which fills the frame of one's vision like a blue wall, only a patch of sky can be seen. It is once more a radiantly clear Autumn day. A door in each side wall connects the room with others. Along the left wall stands a simple bedstead of yellow wood with straw-mattress and a gay spread. To the right stands a small table with a sofa. A primitive washstand with a mirror and a wardrobe in which* MÄURER, *whose room it is, keeps his garments. On several hooks hang his hat, greatcoat, cane, etc. On the table, which is covered by a green cloth, stands a water bottle with glasses. In one corner is* MÄURER'S *trunk.* LUCY *is sitting at the table writing letters.* HANNA ELIAS *enters softly through the door at the left.*

LUCY

Is Schilling asleep again.

HANNA

Yes, he's asleep. For a moment he waked up and asked for Dr. Rasmussen. What is the earliest hour at which the doctor can be here?

LUCY

Immediately after his attack yesterday, even before Schilling expressed the wish to see him—Mäurer wired.

HANNA

And do you think he'll take the long trip?

LUCY

Without hesitation, undoubtedly.

HANNA

[*Sits down at the table.*] He is asking very urgently for Dr. Rasmussen. [*She continues after a brief silence.*] I'll never forget the time spent on this island — last night and to-day.

LUCY

[*Alternately listening, writing and thinking over her letter.*] I can well believe that.

HANNA

You see what a good thing it was for me to have come, Miss Lucy.

LUCY

[*Puzzled.*] I don't think I quite understand, Mrs. Elias.

HANNA

I have felt for some time that a grave change was coming over Schilling. I knew that and it made me anxious.

LUCY

But in that case you might have told yourself that it would be well for him to be free of all his worries for a time.

HANNA

He is shaken to the soul through the frightful torments of his truly German wife. He has said to me a hundred times: "Hanna, when you're near me I have a feeling of security." A woman like that is guilty of actual crimes against her husband with her reproaches and her tears and her accusations and her daily demands for money. He can't earn it with all his labour and she could far more easily provide for them with her music.

LUCY

It may be that Evelyn is not very efficient, though I am told she was just that when, as a governess, she returned from England.

HANNA

I found this man sunk in misery and in that misery I loved him. I loved him because he was wretched. I wanted to save him from his despair. I have never taken a penny of money from him. On the contrary, I tried to get it for him. I wanted to snatch him from his cares. I didn't, like Evelyn, desire to be supported and upheld by him. She throws every responsibility on poor Schilling. I bear the responsibilities myself. I know his art is far too high for him to make any money on it. He needs me; I'm indispensable to him; I'd share my last crust with him.

Lucy

I don't think I could ever persuade myself that I'm utterly indispensable to any one.

Hanna

Your affair with Mäurer is quite different in kind. [Lucy *gives a short, careless laugh.*] But I said to him: "I want to promote your work and your happiness. I'll leave and never turn up again if you're happier with your wife." I was thinking, for instance: there he sleeps on a wretched cot in his damp, icy studio. Let him sleep with his wife, I thought, if it's good for him. Well, he answered me: "Anything but that!" He stood for hours in front of my house one night when I had Russian gentlemen visiting me. It was below zero. At eleven he went away because I hadn't noticed that he was there. At half past twelve, when everything was quiet he came back and threw pebbles at my window. So fortunately I discovered him.

Lucy

[*Drily.*] He must have been pretty well frozen to death.

Hanna

He was more dead than alive when he came to me. He didn't get warm till toward morning.

Lucy

Did he ever before have attacks like the one yesterday?

HANNA

I know that his wife used to excite him dreadfully. She threatened to kill herself if he didn't give up his love for me. But how can he do that? My love is the only thing that gives meaning to his life and saves him from drowning in banality. Is he to give up his art too? And he says that his love for me is the innermost soul of his art.

LUCY

Unfortunately he hasn't worked much during the past few years.

HANNA

Oh, he made an exquisite portrait of my little son Gabriel.

LUCY

But when you consider that during several years he created nothing but this one picture, you must admit that his powers have been at a very low ebb.

HANNA

Not as low as you think. He admires my nude pose more than anything in the world. But I was myself ill for many months and couldn't stand unclad in his cold, unhealthy studio and in a very cramped attitude to pose for his Birth of Venus. I did it with the exertion of my last bit of strength; I stood until I fainted and fell from the box on which he had placed me.

LUCY

I am assuming that your intentions are entirely good. The result is nevertheless quite clear. And

so, as a matter of common sense, you ought to support Mäurer's attempts.

HANNA

[*Rising.*] He tells me that Mäurer depresses him and discourages him.

LUCY

[*Laughs heartily but not without bitterness.*] Well, I'll never understand the various contradictory things that people succeed in chattering!

SCHILLING'S VOICE

Hanna!

HANNA

You see, he calls me, Miss Lucy! [*She goes in to* SCHILLING.

[*Scarcely has* HANNA *disappeared when* RASMUSSEN *comes in rather noisily. As a physical type he is akin to the island fishermen. The hair of his head is slightly grey; his reddish blond beard shows no sign of age yet. His garments are plain and serviceable, his shoes heavy. He carries a wallet, a light overcoat, a soft black hat and a massive cane.*

RASMUSSEN

[*Clearing the threshold with one great stride.*] Why there you are, Lucy! Well, what's up? What's the mess you folks got into now? Howdy? Where's Ottfried? How are you all?

Lucy

[*Quieting him.*] Sh! Be still! Schilling is lying in the next room.

Rasmussen

Oh, is that so? I beg your pardon, Lucy.

Lucy

[*Half-humorously.*] For a physician who does not practice you have a pretty lively time!

Rasmussen

Next I'll collect fees. But you people are really getting troublesome. And a sinister star seems to be influencing us all these last few years. I lost my father not thirteen months ago, then last December, my brother. Immediately after that you summoned me and I had to foretell the early death of your mother; in the meantime came the death of an old benefactress, and now there's probably something very wrong here. I can assure you, too, that the trip with Evelyn wasn't any pleasant addition to my worries.

Lucy

The trip with whom?

Rasmussen

With Evelyn. She isn't here yet, by the way. The minute we landed at the ferry island I managed to get rid of her and ran on foot across the dunes. Before the waggon grinds her through the

sand another half hour will pass. Just think, I haven't seen the sea in three years, although I was born in Wollin.

LUCY

Look here, Rasmussen, that's an impossible situation. Hanna Elias is in there with Schilling.

RASMUSSEN

But, for heaven's sake, I thought that was all off!

LUCY

That's very easily said but not so easily accomplished when you're dealing with a nature like Hanna's.

RASMUSSEN

Well, you may believe me that Evelyn is equally convinced that it's all over. But that's horrible! Why didn't you give me some shred of a hint in your wire?

LUCY

I wonder myself that Ottfried didn't take thought in this case. He's always reproaching me with my thoughtlessness.

RASMUSSEN

What was I to do? The wire read: "Come at once: Schilling ill." Of course I ran over to Evelyn. I assumed, and I had a right to assume, that she would be better informed than I. And when you're called, in your capacity of physician, to an island at the end of the world, you need

something definite to go on. There's no pharmacy here . . . nothing! You don't look especially well yourself!

LUCY

[*Avoiding a direct answer.*] None of us slept much.

RASMUSSEN

Confound it all! What are we going to do now? I don't see that in the whole miserable business any blame attaches to me. When I discovered that Evelyn was not informed, I even tried to keep her from making the journey. But, in the end of things — I didn't know just what had happened and, since she insisted on coming, what could I do? I really hadn't the right to object.

LUCY

Poor Schilling! He's destined not to be spared anything!

SCHILLING'S VOICE

[*Singing.*]

"By the water, by the water,
That's where I'm at home."

RASMUSSEN

[*Listens and laughs.*] Well, I don't suppose it's so very bad. What actually happened to him?

LUCY

Oh, we were real happy and contented before these night birds came flying here. We had plans for travelling and fine notions. Now I, personally,

have just one plan: to be quite independently active somewhere.

RASMUSSEN

Where is Ottfried?

LUCY

Pursuing the higher life with a Russian admirer, a Miss Majakin.

RASMUSSEN

Look here, have you all gone mad together? I had really thought that a vigorous, short-necked fellow like Mäurer, at his age and with his experience, would be cured of experimenting. Especially when I consider — quite without flattery, Lucy — his undeserved good luck. Although he's the opposite of poor Schilling, yet once in a while he gets an attack and becomes stubborn and irresponsible, probably just when you've been ready to take your oath on his steadiness and responsibleness.

SCHILLING'S VOICE

Isn't that Rasmussen?

RASMUSSEN

[*Loud.*] It is!

SCHILLING'S VOICE

Come on in, then!

RASMUSSEN

[*Opens the door of* SCHILLING'S *room a little and calls in.*] Well, old boy, are my sins forgiven me?

SCHILLING'S VOICE

Don't talk nonsense, please, Rasmussen.

RASMUSSEN

But I've got to find out first. You might turn the barbarian out.—Well, now, what's the meaning of this, Gabriel?

[*He goes in to* SCHILLING *and closes the door behind him.* LUCY *gathers up her writing material, after she has addressed her letter and stamped it. Thereupon* OTTFRIED MÄURER *enters, immediately hanging up his hat and cane.*

MÄURER

Magnificent weather! All morning one could hear that bell buoy of yours, or whatever it is. As though the fishes in the sea were keeping the Sabbath. Even Miss Majakin likes the little island now. We paid a visit to the lighthouse keeper. And I've actually brought you a real dead cuckoo which we found at the bottom of the tower on a perfect battlefield of birds.

LUCY

You bring me a dead bird, Ottfried?

MÄURER

A sign of my generosity. You remember the other day, when Schilling played so gruesomely with the echo, you insisted that the cuckoo visits the island. Well, I wanted to confirm your statement.

LUCY

[*Significantly.*] You bring me a bird who was stupid enough to fly toward a great light in the darkness and, in the process . . . broke his skull.

MÄURER

Exactly. The cheated idealist lies on the table in the guest room downstairs. I grant you that the misuse of the bird's faithful yearning is hard to explain without the existence of a particularly devilish and stony-hearted devil in the universe.

LUCY

Has Miss Majakin become at all accustomed to the dialect of the fishermen?

MÄURER

She said that when the fishermen and the women talked together it sounded like an assembly of seamews. Then she made another extremely neat remark. She said that the roll of the surges, heard at a great distance, was like the sound of a mighty steer eagerly cropping the grass and then snorting. Now listen carefully. It sounds just so. And so she thinks that this is the explanation of the origin of the legend of the steer Zeus and Europa.

LUCY

You improvised that explanation two years ago. It made its way from me to Schilling, from Schilling to Hanna, and from Hanna to Miss Majakin.

MÄURER

It's supposed to come from me? I don't believe that.

LUCY

By the way, Rasmussen is with Schilling.

MÄURER

Has Rasmussen arrived?

LUCY

And he's surprised that you didn't wire him a word about Hanna Elias.

MÄURER

From what point of view ought I to have mentioned her?

LUCY

If you had told him of her presence, he wouldn't have brought Evelyn Schilling with him.

MÄURER

Is Evelyn here? [*He grows pale, but shrugs his shoulders stubbornly.*] Well, I'm sorry. It shows that one shouldn't meddle in other people's affairs. But there's always the temptation to play Providence. [*He pulls himself together and takes several steps toward* SCHILLING'S *door.*] Well, I'll have to greet Rasmussen, anyhow.

LUCY

So you've entirely given up the plan of going to Greece?

MÄURER

Don't believe it could be done. Can't straighten things out. I'll have to stay in Berlin this winter.

LUCY

When did you come to that conclusion?

MÄURER

I was forced to it, little girl, in looking through my contracts.

LUCY

[*Significantly.*] Old contracts or new ones?

MÄURER

The old ones, of course! One can hardly make new ones here. [*He has approached her and caresses her gently.*

LUCY

Why can't one? — You're so tender, Ottfried!

MÄURER

As always, little girl.

LUCY

[*Looks at him with wide-open calm eyes.*] Well, you'd better go in to your poor, shipwrecked traveller!

MÄURER

Are you out of humour, Lucy?

LUCY

No, only a bit thoughtful.

[*She looks down in front of her and drums the table lightly with her fingers.* MÄURER *kisses her left hand which hangs down and then goes in to Schilling.* LUCY *breathes a sigh of resignation and is about to go out through the door at the right. At that moment she hears a knocking at the door.*

LUCY

Come in, please!

[*The door is opened and* KLAS OLFERS *beckons to an emaciated, shabbily dressed and deeply veiled woman to enter. It is* GABRIEL SCHILLING'S *wife* EVELYN.

KLAS OLFERS

I think it's best maybe to ask the young lady here. [LUCY, *with presence of mind, unobtrusively keeps* EVELYN *in the door.*

LUCY

It's probably a mistake, Mr. Olfers. I think the lady is looking for Dr. Rasmussen.

EVELYN

[*Without lifting her veil.*] Isn't Rasmussen here?

LUCY

[*Blushing deeply.*] As you see, no.

Evelyn

I suppose you are Miss Lucy Heil.

Lucy

[*As before.*] Yes. How did you know it?

Evelyn

I heard you playing a sonata of Schubert at a morning performance in the "Singakademie."

[Klas Olfers *goes out shrugging his shoulders.*

Evelyn

May I take off my things here? You have probably guessed that I am the unhappy wife of Gabriel Schilling.

[*She takes off her hat and veil without waiting for* Lucy's *permission.*

Lucy

[*Nervously.*] This is Professor Mäurer's room. If you don't mind, Mrs. Schilling, we had better go to mine.

Evelyn

First of all, where is my husband?

[Mrs. Schilling *now shows herself to be a wasted, prematurely aged woman with deepset eyes, high cheekbones and a hectic flush on her face. She is past thirty-five but seems older and is devoid of feminine charm.*

Lucy

I'm sure you'll want to rest a bit first, dear Mrs. Schilling. I suppose you have travelled all night.

Perhaps you'll rest half an hour first? Mr. Schilling is asleep and there is, at any rate, no cause for immediate anxiety.

EVELYN

[*Sinks down in a chair.*] Don't ever marry, my dear young lady. [*She weeps softly.*

LUCY

[*In painful embarrassment.*] You're worn out, Mrs. Schilling. The night trip has made you nervous. If you'll entrust yourself to me . . . You need rest. I know how that is. I nursed my dear mother for many months. You can't conquer depression by thinking and brooding.

EVELYN

[*Trying to pull herself together.*] It'll pass, don't bother.

LUCY

I would really like to persuade you to come to my room.

EVELYN

Do you know how my life seems to me? You're a woman; why shouldn't I be frank with you? With endless agony, with mortar made of blood and with heavy stones one builds a firm house — and when it's done, it's a house of cards.

LUCY

You see everything in its worst aspect just at present.

EVELYN

Yes, the world seems to me something utterly strange, wholly uninteresting, horribly indifferent. It's a disconsolate place, empty and quite dark. You believe that I exaggerate? But I never nursed a wish that wasn't modest. I wanted a home, a small competence. But God in his inscrutable goodness has denied me even that little. What I saved I have been cheated of. I went to England and I saved money. I wore good clothes. I could travel during the holidays. A friend of mine and I, we visited Holland and Normandy; we didn't have to be stingy; we took *table d'hôte* in the best hotels! And then Schilling came. I thought he was an honest man; I thought he would perform his duties and that my little savings were safe in his hands! Ah, yes! Look at me! [*She shows the great patches in her skirt and the torn lining of her shabby jacket.*] I have given everything, made a sacrifice of everything — in vain!

LUCY

[*Fighting down her disgust.*] Better times will come.

EVELYN

To-morrow, perhaps? I know all about that. To-day I borrow or, rather, beg twenty marks from Dr. Rasmussen for this trip, and . . . to-morrow, I'm told that I will travel around the world on a first-class ticket. To-day I live with my daughter on a stale roll and a bit of skimmed milk . . . to-morrow I am to eat at Dressel and Uhl! I know all that; it's nothing new. One can't satisfy one's

hunger with that to-morrow. You might as well give poor sucklings a nipple soaked in gall and vinegar. A woman thinks: Your husband has left you to-day, but he will come back to you to-morrow. Yes. But in what state? Carried on a stretcher. Perhaps on his deathbed.— I must see him! Where is Gabriel?

LUCY

At all events you had better calm yourself first! You must see that in this condition a meeting would be harmful to both of you.

EVELYN

What does that mean? What are you all trying to do with me? Why don't you let me go to Gabriel? Why don't you tell me what has happened? Everything seems so unnatural here. What are those voices in the next room?

LUCY

[*Lying as a last resort.*] A father and son from Stralsund.

[HANNA ELIAS *comes from* SCHILLING'S *room. The two women gaze at each other for a few seconds in measureless amazement.*

EVELYN

[*In a tone of astonishment which has lost any trace of the fearful, tearful excitement which she had shown just a moment before.*] Is it you, Hanna? What are you doing here?

HANNA

Since, in some incomprehensible way we have met here, let us talk matters over like two reasonable beings.

EVELYN

In an incomprehensible way, you say?

HANNA

Well, accidentally, at all events.

EVELYN

So your presence is accidental then? Or do you think it incomprehensible or accidental that a wife should hasten to her own husband when she learns that he is sick, sick maybe to death? But how did you get here? What do you want here?

HANNA

It's not a question of ourselves just now, but, at all events, of your husband's welfare. So I beg of you to ask no further questions now. Or, at least, not here. I assure you Schilling must be saved the spectacle of a quarrel between us. I'll go down to the beach with you. There I'll answer whatever you choose to ask.

EVELYN

If you please, Hanna, let's have no subterfuges. What do you want here? I'd like to know that riddle solved. How is it that you two had parted and that I, poor deluded fool of a wife, believe in the reality of that parting, and that it's all over

between you, and then you go and deride me behind my back? Did you get him to knuckle under again? Did you persuade him again that your're not a harlot? Or must one be a harlot, perhaps, to please one's own husband?

HANNA

[*Losing her self-control for a moment.*] It's rather you who are a harlot! — but please stop that now. If you have any feeling of womanly dignity, then stop using such a tone and being so insulting this minute.

EVELYN

[*To* LUCY.] Do you hear this lady speaking of womanly dignity?

HANNA

Surely I speak of womanly dignity.

LUCY

Please remember, ladies, that you are in a small inn. We mustn't cause a disturbance. It's impossible that you should continue. For the sake of the sick man, if for no other reason.

EVELYN

[*To* LUCY.] You ought to hear the story, Miss Heil, by what means, by what crookedness, the lady got Gabriel to the point where she has him now. First she pretended to be my friend — the hypocrite! "You are too patient," she said, "you should demand more! You should make it clear

to him that you are a human being with equal rights and not a slave. You German women are all slaves." That's the way she went on continually, and first I believed it all, till I saw what her aim was, to steal Gabriel from me because her own husband was tired of her. A fine crowd! An excellent family! Tell about that! Why don't you tell about that, my dear Hanna! There you have a subject for conversation that will employ all your eloquence.

HANNA

Such phantastic, morbid stories told by a woman who believes herself to have been insulted . . . they cannot touch me.

[RASMUSSEN *bursts angrily into the room. He closes the door gently and carefully behind him before he speaks.*

RASMUSSEN

Confound it, what's the matter here? What kind of an idea of Schilling's condition have you? He's getting restless and asking questions; what am I to answer him? Kindly transfer your battle field to some other place!

[EVELYN *forgets* HANNA *and stares at* RASMUSSEN. HANNA *pulls herself together and determinedly walks out through the door at the right.*

EVELYN

[*Starting to sweep past* RASMUSSEN *toward* SCHILLING'S *door.*] Where is my husband?

RASMUSSEN

[*Restraining her.*] Now you just wait a bit first.

SCHILLING'S VOICE

Rasmussen!

RASMUSSEN

[*Holding* EVELYN *who struggles in his energetic grip.*] I tell you that if you have a gleam of good sense left, or if you can find a trace of love for your husband in your heart, or if you care about keeping him alive — yes, just that! — for a while longer, then don't go in to him just now!

EVELYN

[*With an involuntary cry which is half a cry for help and half a shriek of stubbornness.*] Gabriel!

SCHILLING'S VOICE

[*Gasping and frightened.*] Yes, that's I! [SCHILLING *appears in the door. Consternation and astonishment mingle on his noble but tragically changed countenance.*] What has happened here?

RASMUSSEN

Nothing! Nothing particular. We've only had further proof that a woman and commonsense are mutually repellent.

EVELYN

[*Forcing her words out.*] You have lied to me, Gabriel! Why did you deceive me just at the mo-

ment when my soul was gathering hope? You said you had freed yourself. You said you had broken with Hanna. And now I discover that you're a cold, brutal, hardened cheat! Why did you do that, Gabriel? Why do you destroy the last rag of respect I had for you? No, I can't respect a man like you any longer.

SCHILLING

[*Has listened with changing colour and with a look of dull suspense. As though begging for enlightenment his glance wanders from* LUCY *to* RASMUSSEN. *Finally he says with a short, choking laugh:*] Is that so? Neither can I.— What brings you here, anyhow, Evelyn?

EVELYN

You had better ask what brings Hanna here, Gabriel.

RASMUSSEN

I declare this controversy closed. I'm your husband's physician, Evelyn, and he is ill . . .

SCHILLING

Don't talk nonsense; I'm not ill! Maybe you really thought, Evelyn, that it was all over with me? No, I'm not going to do anybody that favour for a while. If you don't believe me, ask Rasmussen! The whole business, Evelyn, simply came of a rather foolish trick which I played on myself yesterday.

EVELYN

[*Grasps her head as though afraid of losing consciousness.*] I must go . . . go . . . or I'll lose my reason.

[*She is about to rush out.*

SCHILLING

Evelyn, you'll stay here now.

EVELYN

I can't stay with a man who is my own husband, the father of my child and, at the same time, the abject slave of a common harlot!

RASMUSSEN

Come, come now! That will do, Evelyn!

SCHILLING

[*After a brief silence, with the same helpless, questioning look in his eyes.*] Now, how did all this come about? I don't know. I never did . . . how shall I put it? . . . I never did consciously strive after the wrong! I really never had any bad intentions!

EVELYN

Pretend to be indifferent if you want to, Gabriel. A day will come when you'll see the difference between the wife you now maltreat and a woman like Hanna Elias.

[HANNA ELIAS *storms in. Her rage is utterly unbridled. Screaming and with clenched fists she rushes up to Evelyn.*

HANNA

I don't care what you say of me! I don't care! I spit upon it! I spit on your damnable love! You have no love! You only lie and lie! You're as swollen with venom as a viper! You have poison and fangs, but no love! Look, how your're tormenting your poor, sick husband! You shameless, worthless creature! You haven't any heart, you haven't any compassion! Yes, pierce me with your eyes! Stab me with the dagger of your looks! Or stab me with a real dagger! What do I care? Life means nothing to me! Only go and leave my Gabriel! He is not yours! You've deliberately lost him! He is mine, mine! I feel it! He is mine — my Gabriel,

[*Below the windows there is suddenly heard the dissonant crying of a small, excited mob. Children and women and half-grown boys utter groans and cat-calls and cries of derision. The noise is silenced by the energetic voice of* KLAS OLFERS: "Be still! Get away from here! What do you want?" *To quiet her and to calm her insane rage* RASMUSSEN *has taken* HANNA *into his arms. He now pushes her slowly out.* MÄURER, *standing behind* SCHILLING, *has witnessed the greater part of the scene.* EVELYN *is silent and almost beside herself with horror. While she remains in the room, her eyes are fixed with horrified astonishment on* SCHILLING. *The latter stands motionless. Once or twice he utters a dry sob. His wide-open eyes are full of tears. Her handkerchief*

in her mouth like a gag Evelyn, *supported by* Lucy, *passes* Schilling *and leaves the room.*

Rasmussen

[*After a silence, to* Schilling.] Well, life will seem different again, Schilling!

Mäurer

[*Laying his hand on* Schilling's *shoulder:*

"Crouch and let pass the ill,
The storm must have its will."

Schilling

[*With unspeakable horror in his bloodless face.*] We're no Greeks, my boy!

[Mäurer, *deeply moved, pats his shoulder and, involuntarily, puts his arms around him. There is silence.* Rasmussen *joins them.*

Schilling

[*Pulling his two friends a little to one side, in a deep, tormented outburst.*] The loathsomeness of it all is throttling me! Give me poison — a strong poison, Rasmussen!

THE FIFTH ACT

The beach as in the first act. The shed of the life-saving station, the figurehead, the boat on the dune, the signal pole and the boards behind the shed.

The sun has set. But the sky is suffused with a vivid afterglow which spreads a magical light over the scene.

LUCY *and* MISS MAJAKIN *come slowly walking up from the shore.*

LUCY

I assure you that, after what we've seen, I am so filled with disgust that I'd rather give up everything, everything, than make the slightest effort to retain it after the manner of these women.

MISS MAJAKIN

But one fights for what one loves, and quite naturally, it seems to me, Miss Heil.

LUCY

I wouldn't fight for it under any circumstances. I have read of harpies; they are like harpies, these women. If they have once struck their talons into their victim, they never give him up. Only they

don't seem to me, like their mythological prototypes, to sing very beautifully.

Miss Majakin

How is Mr. Schilling?

Lucy

Schilling is asleep. He has been sleeping a death-like sleep for hours.

Miss Majakin

In some diseases there is a frightful sleep like that from which the patient does not awaken.

Lucy

Rasmussen hinted as much. [*A brief silence.*

Miss Majakin

Mr. Mäurer seems very much attached to you, Miss Heil.

Lucy

I consider Mäurer my friend and shall always consider him as such. What he does with his life, beyond that relationship, doesn't concern me. He is free! I make no demands on him. I am grateful that my bit of talent will always assure me my bread and cheese.

Miss Majakin

That is true. You held a position in the opera orchestra at Dresden for two seasons, didn't you?

LUCY

Yes, I did. But if I undertake something now it will be to open a small conservatory in some city of medium size.

MISS MAJAKIN

Do you think Professor Mäurer will ever marry?

LUCY

[*Laughs.*] I'm sure I don't know. If one considers the things he sees in the lives of his friends, one can't blame him for being scared.

MISS MAJAKIN

It seems so to me too. He seems to be an enemy of marriage.

LUCY

And you probably believe in it.

MISS MAJAKIN

I can imagine a woman being held all her life by a man like Professor Mäurer. I can imagine that, Miss Lucy.

LUCY

But that you would hold him equally long, do you believe that?

MISS MAJAKIN

I cannot attract Mr. Mäurer at all. He has a very great love and a very great admiration for an entirely different lady from myself.— Do you know that we are going to leave?

LUCY

Why should you leave so soon, Miss Majakin? Let Hanna Elias leave! Let her go to the other side of the world and see to it that she takes Evelyn Schilling with her! But if you like it here as much as you say, do stay!

MISS MAJAKIN

I can scarcely believe that you seriously mean what you say. And even if it were the serious meaning of your woman's heart — I would not stay. I assure you that I, too, have been frightened by what I have seen and heard of the fate of this poor, broken man and artist.

LUCY

I am so enraged I could beat these women — actually beat them with my fists.

MISS MAJAKIN

And me, too, I suppose?

LUCY

No, Miss Majakin, I have no desire to beat you. I would only wish that you go back quietly to your father.— Take my word for it: Mäurer is not a man like Gabriel Schilling. Mäurer takes what he wants. Then he goes off and models his statues. He entertains no scruples.

MISS MAJAKIN

Then he hasn't found the right woman yet.

Lucy

[*Laughs.*] Perhaps! Who knows, Miss Majakin?

Miss Majakin

When a man is so inconstant, it always means that he has not yet found the woman who understands him to the innermost movements of his soul.

Lucy

Perhaps you know the right woman for him. To be sure, every woman thinks she is the right woman. I dare swear that even poor Evelyn is convinced that she is the absolutely right wife for Schilling. But one can't tell whether your instinct in this special case may not be the right one, Miss Majakin? [*A brief silence.*] Don't you think there's a sense of repressed terror in the air?

Miss Majakin

Something dead, yes. The calm causes that.

Lucy

It's oppressive. Look how, beside each boat, its own image lies on the glassy surface. For Schilling's sake I would have a wind come. He so yearned for a storm.

Miss Majakin

Usually man is frightened at nature; at times nature seems to be frightened of man.

LUCY

I believe it's all over with Schilling.

[*For some time a calling has been heard in the distance. Fishermen hurry up and down the shore.* LUCY *and* MISS MAJAKIN *have paid no attention to these things. But strolling along they have now disappeared between the sand dunes. The carpenter* KÜHN *appears accompanied by an apprentice and a wheel-barrow. They pile timber on it.*

KÜHN

Boy, hurry! The wind's coming!

THE BOY

Why are the fishermen running about on shore?

KÜHN

The herrings are coming!

THE BOY

Do you see all the lights out there at sea? Our fishermen have all put out.

KÜHN

Well, let them be and attend to your boards.

THE BOY

D'you think the painter from Berlin will die?

KÜHN

Hold your tongue! What business is that of ours?

THE BOY

I only thought we might make a coffin of fir for him.

KÜHN

Only God knows for whom you've got to make a coffin.

THE BOY

Why, look, look, there he comes!

KÜHN

Who?

THE BOY

Why, then he isn't sick at all.

[GABRIEL SCHILLING *comes from among the dunes at the left. He is insufficiently clad in a shirt, trousers and coat, but no collar, waistcoat and socks. Swiftly as a somnambulist he walks straight up to the figurehead which is brightly lit up at definite intervals by the moving light of the lighthouse. When he has come quite close he stands still and looks at it.*

KÜHN

Good evening.

SCHILLING

[*Frightened, in a husky voice.*] Good evening. Who are you?

KÜHN

Are you maybe Mr. Schilling, the painter, if I may ask?

SCHILLING

My name and profession are not to the purpose. Tell me how it happens that this figure is alternately in darkness and in light?

KÜHN

That's caused, quite naturally, by the lighthouse.

SCHILLING

I have been observing that for quite a while at a distance. I didn't know what it meant.

KÜHN

How — meant?

SCHILLING

At first I didn't want to come over here. But finally I made up my mind that it must mean something. Where did this figurehead come from anyhow?

KÜHN

From a Danish brig which was wrecked out here.

SCHILLING

That's right. And the ship and its crew naturally went to the bottom.

KÜHN

You're quite right. That's what happened.

SCHILLING

What was the name of the brig?

KÜHN

It was called the Isalbe.

SCHILLING

I have heard that name before somewhere, or seen it.

KÜHN

You probably saw it in the churchyard where the bodies of the Isalbe's sailors were buried. There's a cross and on it is written Isalbe.

SCHILLING

We really lie very comfortably up there in the sand.

KÜHN

What did you say, if I may ask?

SCHILLING

Well, can you think of a better place to be buried in? Or would you rather lie in Berlin, in one of those crowded cemeteries?

KÜHN

I'm a long way from considering that at all.

SCHILLING

No motor-busses here, no tram-cars, nothing but the leaping, hurrying grains of sand! And the great, healthy, briny storm! The noble salutation

of the sea to the mound beneath which you are lying.

KÜHN

You don't enjoy all that when you're dead.

SCHILLING

Don't be so sure. How can you tell? I once read somewhere: "God will not extinguish in the womb of earth the soul he kindled in the womb of woman." By the way, will you look behind you?

KÜHN

[*Does so.*] Why not? What am I supposed to see there?

SCHILLING

Why, it's obvious. You need no commentary of mine. The sea has probably washed some other poor devil on the shore.

KÜHN

[*Who doesn't see anything, astonished.*] What kind of a poor devil?

SCHILLING

[*Staring straight ahead.*] I don't know whom they are burying. Is that a custom of yours here that the parson walks first and then the children with the crucifix? It's funny, though, that they don't sing.

KÜHN

Oh, you're just trying to fool me.

SCHILLING

You made the last little wooden house for that poor devil from the Isalbe too, didn't you?

KÜHN

You certainly are able to see more than I. Otherwise I don't understand all that.

SCHILLING

Do you think I don't recognise my old friend Mäurer because he has a top hat on and holds an umbrella in his hand, and because it storms and rains a bit?

THE BOY

I'm afraid that fellow is crazy.

SCHILLING

And perhaps you think I don't know the ladies? The women who run behind the procession and who . . . who . . . lift up their skirts so carefully, because that's their greatest care when it rains?

KÜHN

But not a drop is falling from the sky, Mr. Schilling.

SCHILLING

[*Taps his forehead.*] Confound it! You're right. What was I thinking of? [*He holds out the palm of his hand.*] Not a drop, as I live. It doesn't matter. I could have sworn that I saw something like that. But now look here: are those six fishermen that are carrying that long, yellow box

on their shoulders? Yes or no? You'll have to agree with my observation now.

KÜHN

If you go on talking that way, sir, I'll get scared and begin to believe that there are ghosts walking on the island and in that case I'd rather leave.

SCHILLING

You are right. I see now. I simply have the habit of mixing up reality and the products of my imagination.

KÜHN

There are people who are looking for you, Mr. Schilling.

SCHILLING

Is that so? Where? If any one should happen to ask you after me . . . don't say anything, anything! Or say, that I would a thousand times rather be huddled away in the sand under the cross of the Isalbe than in the most elegant mausoleum in Berlin. And tell them that if a man lift up his hands thus, and go straight ahead . . . he may sleep out in the ocean too.

KÜHN

[*Laughs.*] All right.

SCHILLING

[*Who has lifted his arms to heaven in the attitude of one praying.*] And if any one should question you further concerning me, then say that the painter

Schilling had the best idea of his life here on this isle of the sea . . . or rather, just say that I've gone in bathing.

[*Tearing himself away with difficulty from the figurehead at which he had been staring hungrily* Schilling, *laughing strangely and with hands held aloft, disappears in the darkness.*

Kühn

Nobody is going to convince me that that man didn't see his own funeral.

[Kühn *and* The Boy *depart with their boards. From the right come* Professor Mäurer *and* Dr. Rasmussen *deep in conversation and standing still now and then.*

Rasmussen

[*Looking back.*] What do you suppose is going on at Klas Olfers'? People with lanterns are constantly leaving the house.

Mäurer

I suppose a new set of tourists has arrived.

Rasmussen

Evelyn won't wake up until morning. There are cases in which morphine is the one true remedy.

Mäurer

Schilling is sleeping without it. But can you tell me, for heaven's sake, the meaning of this leaden sleep into which he has fallen?

RASMUSSEN

I can. The technical name of it will scarcely interest you. Be clear about one point: it is a sleep from which only a very transitory awakening is possible.

MÄURER

What exactly do you mean by that "only"? Tell me!

RASMUSSEN

Never mind. Let's say no more about it.

MÄURER

Surely you don't mean to say that there's no hope for Schilling at all?

RASMUSSEN

That is exactly what I mean to say, Ottfried.

MÄURER

In other words, Schilling is going to die?

RASMUSSEN

Listen, Ottfried, and don't excite yourself. The disease has been gradually making headway for probably ten years. It's the explanation of his moral slackness. Otherwise, given his nature, he would probably have offered a more vigorous resistance to these women and to all the corrupting influences about him. At all events I'm very glad to have had the chance of making my peace with him.

MÄURER

[*Fearfully pressing* RASMUSSEN's *arm.*] And you really mean? . . . Impossible! That would be too frightful!

RASMUSSEN

Yes, that's what I mean, my boy. There's nothing to be done about it. Don't break my arm, please. I mean that Schilling is a doomed man and will not leave this island alive.

MÄURER

And all doubt of that fact is excluded?

RASMUSSEN

You may doubt, if it amuses you. But anyhow, the wheels of life had gone pretty thoroughly over him even as it was. His personal honour even was pretty badly splotched. You know it better than I that even his own colleagues withdrew from him.

MÄURER

[*Bursting out.*]. Oh, yes, they baited him as one would a beast. That's the right expression for it. The vulgarity was entirely on the part of those who asserted that this essentially noble soul would live on the money which Hanna Elias got from her lovers. I'll stake my life on the truth of the fact that his unconquerable decency was his undoing, and that he wouldn't soil his hand with a penny.

RASMUSSEN

Very well. But it's all fruitless now.

MÄURER

It's my opinion that, in spite of everything, Schilling might have done some passable work in his art yet. Only his sluggish will needed stimulation. You should have seen him a few days ago. We had bolstered him up thoroughly. That was before his fate turned up again in the form of Hanna. And for the same reason I'm sure that, however long the disease may have been in him, it reached its acute stage only with the arrival of these women. That day when he broke down in the churchyard and we came and saw that woman bending over him, it seemed to me as though some demon straight from hell must blow his horn to this horrible man-hunt.

RASMUSSEN

And it grew worse and more cruel. Beware of that Majakin woman!

MÄURER

I'm no Gabriel Schilling, Rasmussen. Within two weeks I'll pack up Lucy and we'll run away to Florence.

RASMUSSEN

Why don't you marry the girl?

MÄURER

Because for too many people of our kind marriage has meant ship-wreck.

[KLAS OLFERS *appears.*

KLAS OLFERS

[*At a distance.*] We're going to have a storm, gentlemen. Is Mr. Schilling with you?

MÄURER

God help us, we can't answer yes. Man, I can't get it into my head that there's really no way out for him.

RASMUSSEN

Death *is* a way out, Ottfried.

KLAS OLFERS

Mr. Schilling is not in the house. He got up and ran off.

MÄURER

My dear Mr. Olfers, you're mistaken.

KLAS OLFERS

I'm not mistaken in the least, professor; the bed is empty. We're looking for him and we can't find him.

RASMUSSEN

He can't have gone far. Perhaps he dragged himself out into the hall and is now lying in one of your empty rooms.

KLAS OLFERS

Not a bit of it. Mrs. Elias and I, we went through all the rooms — even looked under the beds. He's gone. He ran toward the beach.

MÄURER

[*Hallooing through his hollow hands.*] Schilling! Schilling!

RASMUSSEN

In that case we'll have to search vigorously. It's quite possible that he's lying unconscious somewhere out here. And we can't let him lie here all night.

MÄURER

[*As before.*] Schilling! Schilling!

RASMUSSEN

I hardly believe that he hears you.

[SCHUCKERT *appears with two other fishermen. He carries a burning lantern.*

KLAS OLFERS

Well, Schuckert, how is it?

SCHUCKERT

We didn't find anything. And we searched the whole beach.

KLAS OLFERS

And you saw nothing of the painter Schilling — not even on the dunes?

SCHUCKERT

Not on the beach and not on the dunes. [*He cries through his hollowed hand.*] Ahoy! Ahoy!

[FISHERMEN *to the right answer him.*

THE FISHERMEN

Ahoy! Ahoy!

SCHUCKERT

Did you find anything?

THE FISHERMEN

[*Answer.*] No, we didn't.

MÄURER

Who is coming there?

[*The wind rises with increased violence. It is difficult to keep erect.*

[LUCY *appears.*

LUCY

Isn't it splendid, Ottfried, that Schilling will enjoy the storm he longed for after all?

MÄURER

We're looking for Schilling, Lucy. He got out of his bed and stole away softly.

RASMUSSEN

Let's think it over.

LUCY

[*With eager and immediate conviction.*] Why, it was flight, of course! Then it *was* Hanna Elias! I heard a woman's voice, down here where the fisherman Kummer lives, crying out at some people.

MÄURER

Little girl, you go and look for her. It'll be your duty to keep her away from Schilling as much as possible.

[*The carpenter* KÜHN *emerges from the darkness.*

KÜHN

Are you looking for Mr. Schilling, gentlemen?

MÄURER

Yes, yes, we are!

KÜHN

He was right here just about half an hour ago.

MÄURER

Where was he?

KÜHN

Right here, gentlemen.

MÄURER

Are you sure you're not mistaken?

KÜHN

Why, I even spoke to him!

MÄURER

What did you talk to him about?

KÜHN

All kinds of things. And yet there was something that's just beginning to worry me. He told me to tell you that he'd gone in bathing.

KLAS OLFERS

Hurry, then, Schuckert! We'll open the shed! We'll get the boat out! Hurry! Did you bring the key, lad?

SCHUCKERT

I got the key, Klas Olfers.

[SCHUCKERT *disappears behind the shed. The creaking of the key in the lock is heard and the opening of the door.*

RASMUSSEN

Mr. Olfers, I'll join you in the boat. [*To* MÄURER.] It isn't so utterly out of the question that, in his lust for the sea, Schilling tried to swim once more.

[*He runs with* KLAS OLFERS *and the other men behind the shed. Their common effort to move the small life-boat is heard. At times the dull rumbling of the oars is audible through the rising storm. The sea begins to thunder more loudly.*

LUCY

I'm going to look for Hanna Elias.

MÄURER

Wait! Suppose the poor fellow did swim out with the intention of committing suicide, and then, perhaps, out there, was seized with regret. . . . Come, we'd better light a fire.

LUCY

The pitch is already burning in front of the shed.

[*The red light of the pitch fire and the*

glowing smoke are now seen shooting up from behind the shed. Out of the darkness come crowding and loudly chattering wives and children of fishermen. They ask one another or urge the men to tell them what has happened. But the men are silent and busy themselves with launching the life-boat. Little boys clamber on the overturned boat that lies on the sand; others climb up the ladder of the signal post. At last the boat is pushed into the water.

MÄURER

[*To the people who throng about him.*] I don't know! I don't know! I can give you no information! Sorry!

[HANNA ELIAS, *wild and desperate, makes her way through the crowd.*

HANNA

Professor Mäurer, has he been found?

MÄURER

No; we are just launching the boat.

HANNA

Oh! He hasn't been found yet?

MÄURER

No.

HANNA

I must get into the boat. I must row out with them! [*She tears herself away and hastens, with streaming hair, toward the boat.*

LUCY

Strange, but I can't feel any anger toward her now.

MÄURER

What do you think? Shall we join them?

LUCY

Look, how ghostly everything is! The sea looks like a mass of coal! And now look at the streaks of foam.

MÄURER

And the streaks are strangely yellow.

LUCY

Beautiful! And watch the yellow reflections in the wet sand.

MÄURER

Yes, yellow, and then again a deep purplish red! You're very calm, little girl!

LUCY

I don't know why. But since the wind arose a new and free and revived feeling came over me. For I believe that he has now found a refuge . . . safe and eternal!

MÄURER

Were you fond of Schilling?

LUCY

[*Looking up at him.*] Not as I am of you?

MÄURER

Shall we two stay together . . . always?

LUCY

[*As before.*] As long as things last in this world. Hush! Hear those uncanny cries below!

MÄURER

Perhaps they have found him at last. Come!

LUCY

No, Ottfried, I won't go.

MÄURER

Why not?

LUCY

I don't like to! I can't either! If Schilling really fled . . . no, I won't join the pack that pursues him even in his death.

MÄURER

Well said. Amen.

LUCY

[*Quickly.*] And so it is! They are bringing him now.

[*Dark forms become visible — fishermen who are carrying a bier upon which* SCHILLING *lies dead. The women and children follow.* RASMUSSEN *walks beside the bier. The procession, moving silently, emerges from behind the shed, passes the figure-head, and disappears to the left.* LUCY *and* MÄURER, *hand in hand, watch it from their slightly raised position. About the whole scene there is an air of strange silence and of unreality.*

THE END

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